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AUGUST 2013

FilmMaker

YOUR NEW GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING

Behind-the-scenes of EDEN

Director Megan Griffiths on her new film inspired by a chilling true story

Shooting with Digital Cinema kit

Why a camera like the Canon C100 offers the best of both worlds

Filmmaking on a micro-budget part 2

Sean J Vincent delivers more practical movie making advice



Can this man save British filmmaking?

Producer Jonathan Sothcott answers your questions

Q&A

Director Sacha Bennett reveals the inspiration behind his work and love for the very latest kit

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Jon Towlson, Starburst Magazine.



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Welcome to

DIGITAL FilmMaker

AUGUST 2013

It seems like everywhere I go these days there are people shooting footage. I saw two film crews in the short walk between Waterloo Station and the South Bank the other day, then another one at a local car show shortly after. They're all over the place. Presumably they knew what they were doing, but we've found that plenty of fledgling filmmakers are after real-world advice.

And the best place to go when you're starting out in any business is to ask someone in the know; someone who has their finger on the pulse, so to speak. In the case of filmmaking, we've done just that in this issue, having created a brand new feature called 'Ask the producer'. Jonathan Sothcott is said man-at-the-helm and he's a goldmine of sensible information and practical advice. Better still, he delivers it all in a no-nonsense fashion.

We didn't have to look far for our first batch of questions either and hopefully you'll find them helpful if you're just starting out. However, if you've got your own queries or quandaries then feel free to email us at the usual address and we'll pass them onto Jonathan for his second instalment next issue. In the meantime, enjoy what we think is another action-packed magazine. Our next issue is due out on the 15th of August and, if you haven't done it already, go and 'like' us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DigitalFilmMakerMagazine.

 **Editor**



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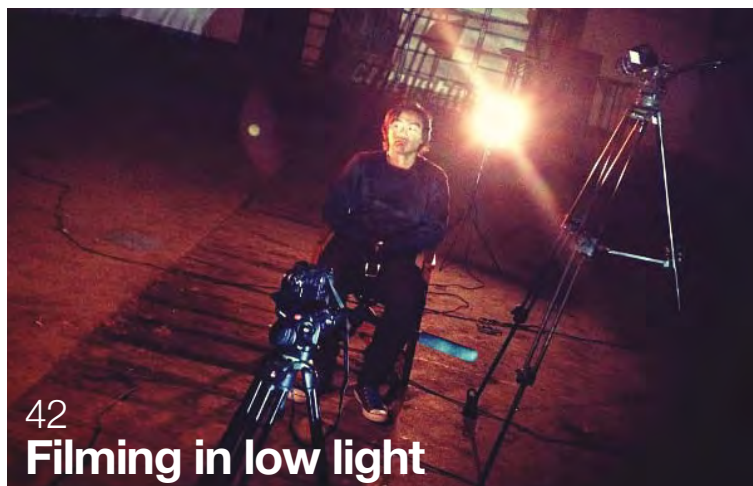
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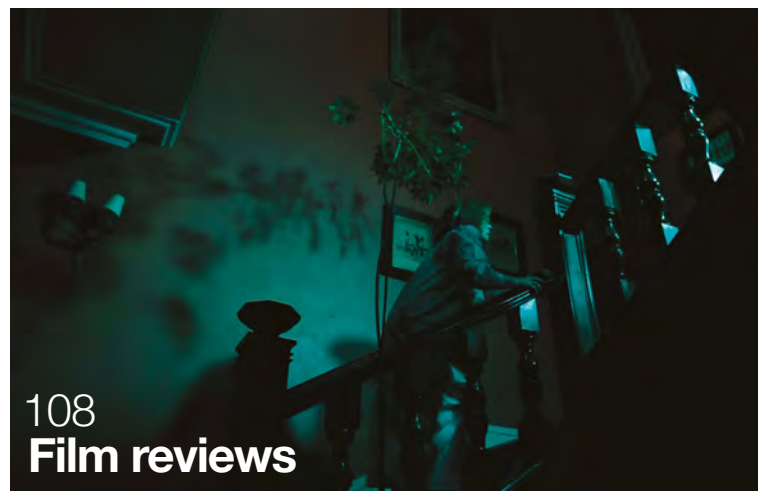
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NEWS

The lowdown on latest developments from the world of digital video

LEICA LAUNCHES ANTICIPATED LEICA X VARIO

Prestigious camera manufacturer Leica Camera AG has unveiled a much anticipated new addition to its digital compact camera line-up: the Leica X Vario. Touted as a 'Mini M', the newcomer is manufactured at Leica's headquarters in Germany and boasts a high performance 16.1-megapixel (effective) APS-C format CMOS sensor, a zoom lens covering a versatile focal range of 28-70mm (35mm equivalent) and Full HD movie recording capability. Incorporating several of the much-loved design and handling characteristics of the popular M-system, the Leica X Vario looks set to deliver same level of image quality and creative freedom as the rest of the company's revered photographic products.

Featuring an unusually large sensor for a camera of its class, the Leica X Vario's CMOS is paired with a superbly engineered Leica Vario Elmar 18-46 mm f/3.5-6.4 ASPH lens, promising unrivalled flexibility to users as the world's very first compact to combine a large APS-C format CMOS image sensor with a zoom lens.

The array of focal lengths afforded by the camera's zoom optic make it an ideal tool for capturing interiors, landscapes and portraits alike, with its newly incorporated 1080p Full HD movie recording capability adding further appeal to consumers in search of a high-quality video recording experience. Movies can be captured at a rate of 30 frames per second and saved in the MP4 format before being uploaded directly to social media sites or mobile devices without the need for any conversion. The camera also features an integrated wind-noise filter that ensures extraneous noise doesn't clutter up or ruin your soundtrack.

A wide range of camera settings allows for total creative freedom, while the camera's responsive AF system promises a snappy performance whether recording stills or action-packed scenarios. The



supreme design and build quality is reminiscent of the superb Leica M-System, with solid aluminium machined components and a high-grip leather trim that upholds the look and feel we've come to expect from the premium brand.

User-friendly handling is delivered through a combination of intuitive on-body controls and a streamlined menu system showcasing an impressive range of automatic and manual functions that allow users to get the best out of the camera when capturing the scene before them, regardless of the conditions. Dedicated dials on the top of the camera provide fast access to parameters such as the shutter speed and aperture settings, with a plethora of further options available at your fingertips, whether shooting in the conventional manner or using the excellent Live View mode. The latter delivers a seamless shooting experience with the camera's 3-inch LCD providing a high-contrast display with parameters such as the plane of focus, white balance and more on hand, allowing scope for fast, easy alterations to be made on-the-fly.

Accessories available for the Leica X Vario include a Leica EVF 2 Viso-Flex electronic accessory viewfinder with 1.4-megapixels and a 90° swivel function, as well as a handgrip that enhances the ergonomics of the camera's design and makes one-handed shooting easier. Additional finger loops in three different sizes can

also be attached to the handgrip to ensure further security when out shooting with the camera, while an optional lens hood and the Leica SF 24 D flash unit help to reduce unwanted reflections and provide additional illumination respectively. Adobe Photoshop Lightroom is included, with support for both Windows and Mac platforms.

Available now in the UK, it can be purchased from authorised dealers with an SRP of £2,150 or £2,250 for a package that includes the X Vario camera protector and a carrying strap in tan leather.

MANFROTTO EXPANDS LIGHTING RANGE

Manfrotto Lighting has announced the expansion of its Lastolite RayD8 c5600 Continuous Lighting range. In addition to the existing range of popular products, Lastolite is now offering a further product option of a single light head, extension tube, power cable and reflector (bulb not included). The continuous light system provides a cost-effective solution for enthusiasts that want a reliable, colour-corrected light (5600k/daylight), with high-output compact fluorescent bulb compatibility ensuring the unit remains cool throughout extended shooting sessions. The RRP for the single light head, fluorescent extension tube, power cable and 25cm reflector is £139.20, with an additional Fluorescent Conversion kit available for £60. Extra Fluorescent Extension Tubes cost £35 each and a colour-corrected 85w fluorescent bulb retails for the same price. Alternatively, the entire RayD8 c5600 Kit can be purchased for £320 - review the options and further specifications at www.lastolite.com



SAMYANG LAUNCHES TWO NEW LENSES

Hot on the heels of the launch of the Samyang 24mm Tilt and Shift lens earlier this year, the prestigious manufacturer has proudly announced the addition of two further lenses to their growing product range. From July, customers can get their hands on the new



16mm f2.0 wide-angle lens and a 300mm f6.3 reflex lens, both of which are specifically designed for DSLRs and mirrorless CSCs with APC-S sized sensors. The Samyang 16mm f2.0 ED AS UMC CS is a manual-focus lens featuring an optical construction of 13 elements arranged in 11 groups, including one ED-type lens with an extra low dispersion ratio, one optical glass aspherical lens and one hybrid aspherical. Each of the lenses also features multi-layer anti-reflective UMC coatings to ensure superb light transmission. Available from July in Canon EF and M, Nikon F, Sony A and E, Pentax K, Fujifilm X, Samsung NX, MFT and Four Thirds mounts (£419.99), the Nikon version features a CPU that allows electronic aperture control for auto exposure and i-TTL flash exposure, retailing at a respectable £459.99.

The compact, lightweight Samyang 300mm f6.3 ED UMC CS is a manual focus, reflex lens

designed for mirrorless compact cameras. The optical design comprises 9 elements arranged in 6 groups, including one ED-type lens ensuring high contrast and effectively preventing chromatic aberration. With its long focal length, small size and weight of just 315g, this lens is a perfect companion for both landscape and nature photography. Available for Sony E, Fujifilm X, MFT and Canon M mounts, the lens will be available from July, carrying an RRP of £289.99.

For full details, contact UK distributor Intro2020 on 01628 674411 or visit the Samyang website at www.samyang.co.uk



Film Stocks 1.5 arrives

Film Stocks 1.5 is the latest innovation to come from software developer Digital Film Tools. The new plug-in is supported by Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, After Effects, Premiere Pro, Apple Aperture and Final Cut Pro and provides users with a wide variety of film stock simulations to apply to their creations. The software offers simulations of 288 different colour and black and white photographic film stocks, motion picture film stocks, and historical photographic processes. Existing users can install the latest version of the software alongside their existing plug-in free of charge, while new customers can purchase Film Stocks 1.5 for \$195 (approximately £124.56) via www.digitalfilmtools.com. One licence will allow the Video version of the plug-in to run in Adobe After Effects, Adobe Premiere Pro, Apple Final Cut Pro (including FCPX), Apple Motion 5 and Avid Editing Systems if installed on the same machine. If you'd rather try before you buy, check out the free trial by following the same link.



THE PENTAX Q7

Following on from the debut of its positively tiny 'Q-series' CSCs, Pentax has released its latest addition to the range. The new Pentax Q7 offers the same resolution sensor as the older Q10. However - while its predecessor incorporates a 1/2.3-inch CMOS - Pentax has chosen to supersize the Q7's offering, opting instead for an enlarged 12-megapixel 1/1.7-inch CMOS sensor instead. The result should, theoretically, be a better all-round image performance from the newcomer, with potentially higher quality images with reduced noise and a wider dynamic range. The Q7's larger sensor does mean that it has a magnification factor of 4.6x, in comparison to the Q10's 5.5x magnification, meaning that lenses mounted on the Q7 will have a wider angle of view. Other features of note include Full HD movie recording, in-camera Shake Reduction, a comprehensive set of manual controls in addition to beginner-friendly presets, plus an expanded maximum sensitivity setting of ISO 12,800. The accuracy of the AF system has also reportedly been enhanced, along with a whole host of creative filters and effects being made available for in-camera editing. Prices and availability are TBA. Lookout for updates over at www.pentax.co.uk



NEW FILTER RANGE FROM MARUMI

Marumi has announced a new Variable Neutral Density filter range, to be distributed in the UK and Ireland by Kenro. Available in nine different sizes, ranging between 49-82mm, the highly-

practical range promises to bring added flexibility to the user, with the potential to generate a range of different effects using just one accessory. Japanese light-reducing material features heavily in the ultra-thin design of the new product. There's also a robust aluminium frame ensuring its suitability for daily use out in the field. Aimed firmly at photographers and videographers looking to streamline their kit bags, the filter range is available now, retailing between £125.40 and £235.14 depending on the selected size.





OLYMPUS OFFERS BONUS LENS WORTH OVER £300

Olympus has announced a new offer available to customers who plan on purchasing the PEN E-PL5 or E-PM2 body or kit from authorised stockists. Make your purchase before the 15th of September this year and you can claim a bonus M.ZUIKO 17mm 1:2.8 Pancake lens. All you need to do is follow the instructions for redemption on the specific Olympus web page found over at www.olympus.co.uk/promotions. The offer is being promoted through the Olympus dealer network - both in-store and online - in conjunction with Olympus-toting street photographer Adam Thirtle. His unique style of shooting perfectly illustrates the level of spontaneity achievable when capturing stills or video with Olympus's compact and lightweight PEN-series cameras. The M.ZUIKO 17mm 1:2.8 Pancake lens complements the small form factor of the PEN cameras, being just 22mm in length and weighing-in at only 71g. Internally, the 5-bladed circular diaphragm ensures beautiful bokeh in out-of-focus areas, while the lens's wide focal length makes it ideal for roving shooters wanting to capture ad-hoc scenes on a daily basis. Visit www.olympus.co.uk for full details of the manufacturer's product ranges and be inspired by some of Adam Thirtle's work. Much of this has been shot on both PEN and OM-D cameras, but you can view more at www.adamthirtle.com

Schneider Kreuznach plan high spec DSLR lenses



Schneider Kreuznach has reiterated plans to focus on producing new, high-quality Full Frame lenses designed specifically for shooting video with DSLRs. The new line of 'FF-Primes' are aimed at satisfying the growing need for top-quality optics that are capable of keeping up with the requirements of contemporary DSLR cinematographers and

photographers. Last year's drop in overall sales for parent company Bad Kreuznach reflected shifts in some of the other subsidiaries that the company invests in, fuelling the decision to focus on development of the Schneider Group's research and development of high-performance photographic lenses, cinema projection lenses, as well as

industrial optics and precision mechanics. "We have adapted to changes in the market conditions and are optimistic about the future. 2012 was a transitional phase for us overall. In 2013, our anniversary year, we will be back on track," said Dr. Josef Staub, CEO of the Schneider Group. You can view the entire product range at www.schneiderkreuznach.com

CANON DEBUTS COMPACT ULTRA-WIDE 11-22MM LENS

Canon has announced a new addition to its burgeoning EF-lens range: the new EF-M 11-22mm f/4-5.6 IS STM. Designed specifically for the manufacturer's CSC - the popular EOS M - this is Canon's first ultra-wide-angle optic to incorporate an Optical Image Stabiliser. The versatile wide-angle zoom range on offer makes this addition an ideal everyday lens for a wide range of creative applications, with its new retractable design and compact dimensions keeping the bulk of your set-up to a minimum. Engineered using Canon's latest optical technologies, the latest lens promises crisp, detailed footage and stills, with the company's proprietary Super Spectra Coatings incorporated to minimise ghosting and flare. The integrated optical IS system offers a 3-stop shutter speed advantage, with its advanced Dynamic IS mode helping to combat the more exaggerated forms of camera shake that can be generated while shooting movies on the go. Near-silent STM technology is an added bonus that ensures



noise from the focusing system is suppressed during filming, so the clarity of your soundtrack retains its integrity. Added extras including a full-time manual focusing ring for pin-point precision and a robust metal exterior add further appeal to this versatile optic. Available from July, the EF-M 11-22mm f/4-5.6 IS STM launches with an RRP of £379.99. For full details visit www.canon.co.uk

NEW SIGMA A SERIES



Sigma has announced UK pricing for its latest A (Art) series lens: the 18-35mm F1.8 DC HSM. This robust, creative lens boasts a fast maximum aperture, providing added versatility when shooting ad-hoc images, portraits and indoor stills and videos in particular; while its wide range of focal lengths make it a flexible everyday optic. The first Sigma zoom lens to achieve a constant maximum aperture of f1.8 throughout its focal range, the APS-C compatible lens also boasts a compact design that makes it an ideal daily shooting companion, with a focal range equivalent to 27-52.5mm on a 35mm camera. Available from early July, in both Canon and Sigma mounts, a Nikon-compatible version of the lens will follow towards the end of the July. In addition, Sony and Pentax mounts are promised in the near future. The lens will carry a UK RRP of £799.99 - check out the full specs at www.sigma-imaging-uk.com

FLASH MEMORY MAKES A COMEBACK

PNY Technologies has relaunched its range of Flash memory cards in a bid to demystify the memory selection process for digital imaging enthusiasts and professionals alike. Adrien Thebault, Storage Media Product Manager for PNY Europe, explained: "We're bringing some clarity back into a confused marketplace. We want consumers and professionals at all levels to easily recognise the right product for them." PNY's new line of SDHC and CompactFlash memory cards covers the entire range of photographic and videographic applications that users of all levels demand. The SDHC/XC/CF Elite Performance 100 MB/s range is designed to cater for elite users looking to use high-speed burst modes, for instance. These cards feature the fastest transfer speeds on the market - up to 100MB per second - and are available in capacities up to 64GB. The new SDHC/XC High-Performance 50 MB/s Flash memory cards deliver the capacity, speed and performance needed to support the capabilities of advanced photo enthusiasts in need of ultra-fast transfer rates. They're perfect for capturing crisp action photography and Full HD video. Card capacities stretch up to 128GB, with transfer speeds of up to 50MB/s. Beginners also benefit from the new SDHC Performance 30 MB/s cards, while the SDHC Premium range is ideal for point and shoot/digital camcorder users. View the entire suite of products at www.pny.eu



REFLECTA UNVEILS NEW LED VIDEO LIGHTS

Official UK distributor Kenro has announced availability of Reflecta's latest cost-effective LED Video Lights. German manufacturer Reflecta is renowned in the industry for producing top-quality digitisation products and innovative light technology, and makes its debut into the UK and Irish markets with this announcement.

The new Reflecta LED Video Light is available in two versions featuring either 105 or 210 dimmable LEDs - equivalent to 4 or 7 watts - allowing for significantly improved exposures to be recorded under dim lighting conditions. Both products feature a broad lighting angle of 55° and an adjustable rotating head with a hotshoe, providing photographers and videographers with the utmost flexibility while shooting on the move.

An integrated control found on both units also allows users to accurately fine-tune the colour temperature of the light emitted, with temperatures ranging between 3000K and 6000K. The lights can be operated by AA or Li-Ion batteries plus DC power, whereas the Reflecta RPL 105-VCT is powered by 4 AA batteries. Both models are lightweight and compact and feature an impressive burn time of up to 150 minutes, making them



ideal companions for on-location shooting. The Reflecta LED Video Light RPL 210 comes with a transparent diffuser, rotating ball head with hotshoe, DC power adaptor, barn doors, and a manual and retails at £186. The Reflecta LED Video Light 105 also comes supplied with a transparent diffuser, rotating ball head with hotshoe and instruction booklet for £99.60. Full specifications can be viewed at www.kenro.co.uk

Rollei launches tough new Actioncam

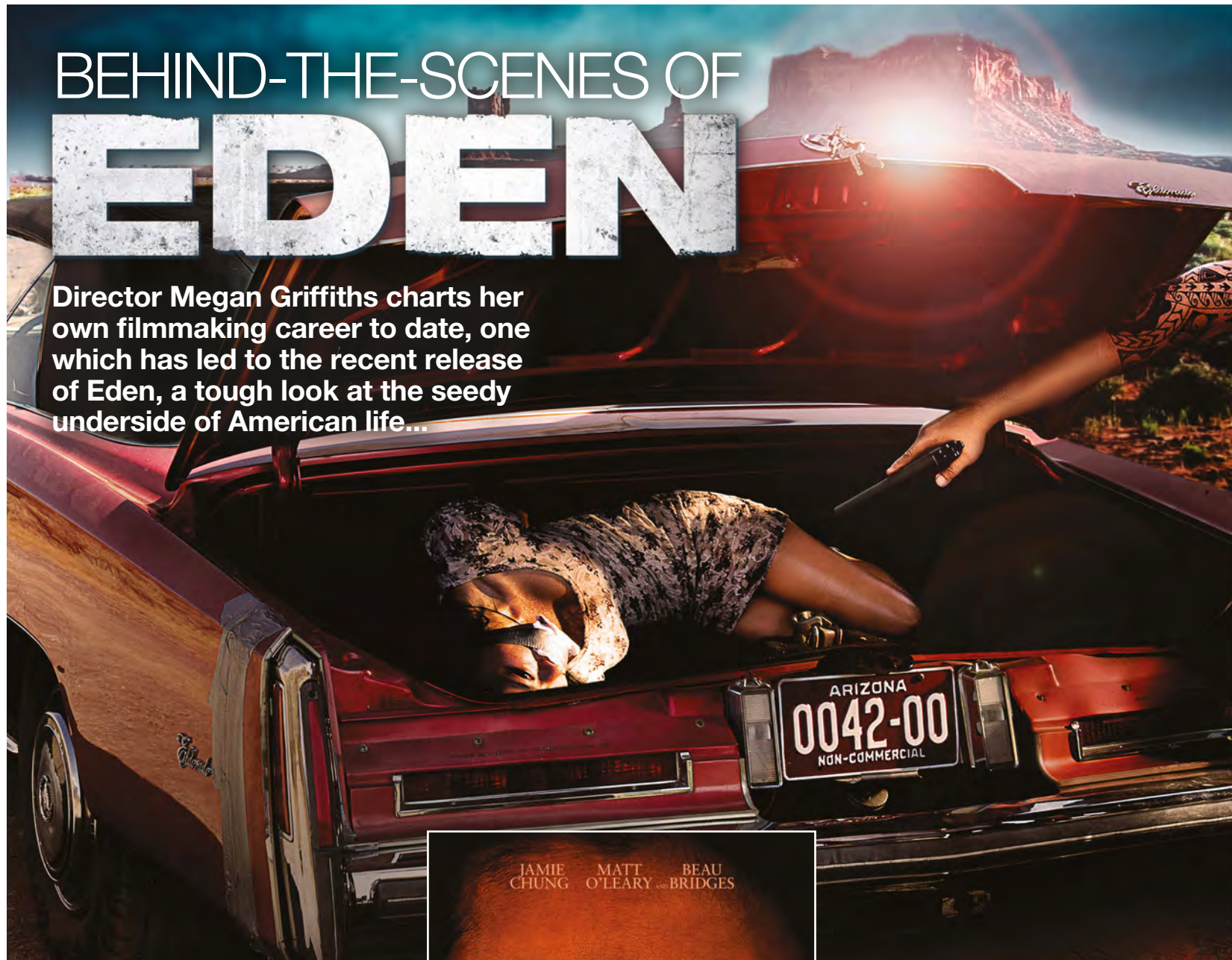
Aimed at intrepid shooters with a taste for adventure, the new Rollei Actioncam 5S Wi-Fi Diving Edition packs plenty of top-quality functionality into its rugged, compact body. Underwater enthusiasts with a passion for capturing the beauty of the world beneath the waves will appreciate the small, lightweight nature of Rollei's latest innovation. Weighing just 80g, the petite Actioncam 5S Wi-Fi 33, is equipped with a flat lens and scope to swap out its interchangeable back, for added versatility. The 7x multi-layer housing ensures pin-sharp shots, with the camera's Full HD (1080p) movie recording mode guaranteeing top-quality underwater footage.



The 175-degree wide-angle lens promises to deliver movies where the action is always in focus. There's also further scope to hike up the frame rate to 60fps (1080i), in order to record slow-motion videos. Integrated WLAN with a range of 40m allows diving enthusiasts to access the camera via their smartphone or tablet and view or share their creations in real time. The package also includes an external TFT display for easy live image checking and post-shoot playback. The Rollei Actioncam 5S Wi-Fi 33 Diving Edition is on sale now for a recommended retail price of £349.95. See the full specifications at www.rcp-technik.com

BEHIND-THE-SCENES OF EDEN

Director Megan Griffiths charts her own filmmaking career to date, one which has led to the recent release of *Eden*, a tough look at the seedy underside of American life...

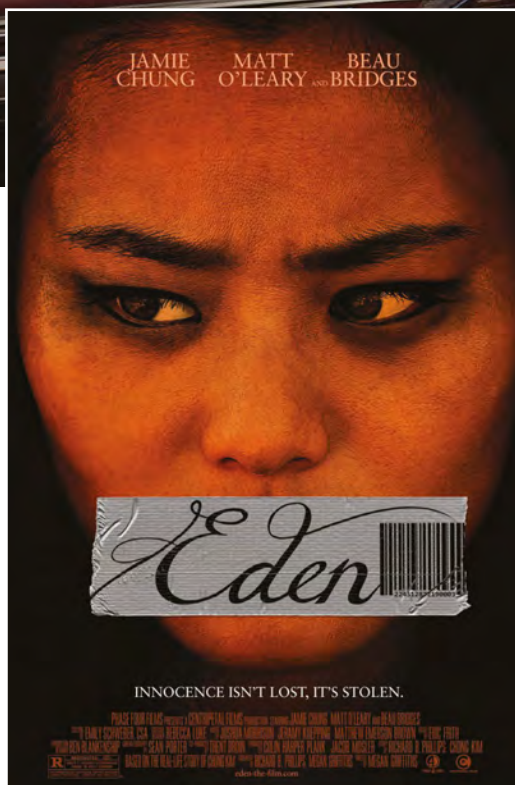


First things first - can you tell us about Megan Griffiths the filmmaker? You hail from Ohio originally right?

I was born in a small town called Athens, Ohio, but moved away when I was still young. I ended up moving back to Athens to get my master's degree at Ohio University, fifteen years after I'd left as a child. The focus at school was on creating the 'whole filmmaker' - in other words, not focusing too narrowly on one track (cinematography, editing and so on), but honing as many skills as possible and valuing what that wider knowledge brings to the choices you make as a director. That training has served me well in the indie sphere.

You're based in the Pacific north west now though, correct? Is the area well-suited to independent filmmakers?

I'm based in Seattle, Washington now. It's an incredible filmmaking community to be a part of - very passionate and mutually supportive



and vibrant. There are a lot of creative people there who are self-motivated and scrappy about getting their projects made, which is constantly inspiring. The city itself, the film offices and vendors, also bend over backwards

to help local talent. There's also an amazing crew base, who I got to know through years of working as a Director of Photography and a first assistant director on other people's films, who have supported me enormously.

What's been your career path to date?

I got my MFA and arrived in Seattle with a cinematography reel and some editing training, then got a few jobs working at a film lab and a corporate video post-facility. These kept my bills paid as I began taking unpaid work on small indie features. I was able to take a month off here and there to work on a film, then return to my job and catch up financially again for a few months, then repeat the cycle. I began to form friendships within the local community and, after a few years of unpaid work, I was able to leave my 'day jobs' and start freelancing full-time. All the while, I had my own creative problems percolating under the surface, which kept me motivated to learn and create.

Was it something you planned out with meticulous detail or has it just fallen into place?

I always knew the end goal - which was to make a living directing my own films. But the path that has led me here has been winding and unpredictable. I didn't have a master plan of how I would arrive where I wanted to be, but I made every choice along the way by following my gut instinct and trusting that it would get me there.

Is there a particular style of movie that has inspired you over the years?

I've always been an audience member who responds to character, performance and complexity within relationships. Whenever a film succeeds in capturing humanity in an honest way, with all its flaws and complications, I'm inspired by that. I'm a big fan of *You Can Count on Me*, *Harold And Maude*, *Being John Malkovich*, *Midnight Run* - films that are all over the place in terms of tone and genre, but all really adept at finding kernels of truth, humour and compassion in the behavior of people.

And who do you look up to in the industry?

I love the career that Soderbergh has had. He has maintained a balance of larger and smaller scale projects and has constantly challenged himself with new genres and styles. I like the idea that you can always be growing and learning, even as you make a name for yourself as a director.



Crew on the set of Eden

It's always great to see women doing well in the world of filmmaking. Do you think the movie business is becoming less dominated by men these days?

Well, I live in a town that is completely dominated by female filmmakers. There must be something in the water in Seattle, because the percentage of women who are making movies is simply not normal. That said, I know that there are more women directing these days, but I don't know that I'd say the business is becoming less male-dominated. The decision makers at studios and

at financing companies are almost always men, and that has a huge effect on what movies get made and the focus of those films. There's still a long way to go, and it involves getting women in those decision-making roles, but also getting female (and male) audience members to go and support female-driven content. I just read a study that said that only something like 28% of films feature a lead performance by a woman, and that's down from past years. That trend is going in the wrong direction and filmgoers have to take at least a little responsibility for that because their dollars are dictating what gets made.



So how did Eden come about?

I was sent the script for Eden right after Sundance 2011, where I had premiered my previous feature *The Off Hours*. Colin Plank (Eden's producer) had helped us get *The Off Hours* made, and he approached me with this script that he had been developing. I read the draft he gave me (which was written by Rick Phillips, who collaborated with Chong Kim, on whom the story is based) and I was blown away by the whole thing. I came on-board and did my own pass on the script, then signed on as a director soon after.

It's a shocking story about trafficking and, sadly, not an isolated example, right?

When I started working on this project, I did a lot of research into domestic trafficking and survivor stories, and you are sadly correct. Chong's story is not an isolated example. Trafficking is a huge worldwide problem, and sex trafficking within the US is a larger issue than I ever knew about. It is shocking and terrible, but at the same time it's something people need to be made aware of. Without awareness and individuals endeavouring to solve the problem, it will never go away.

Can you tell us about the production process - locations, crew and suchlike?

We shot the film almost entirely in Washington state, which is significant because the landscape of Washington is not what most people think of when they think of desert locations. But having lived in Washington for many years and driven across the state many times, I knew that there was an arid region right in the middle of it. Colin (the producer), Sean (the DoP) and I went out and scouted for a day in that region and found many of our exteriors very quickly. We looked at pictures of those locations next to pictures of Nevada,



which was the film's actual setting, and we couldn't tell the difference. So we decided to shoot in Washington. Both Colin and I live there, so we were happy to stay near home for the shoot. Plus, I know and love so many of the local cast and crew and I knew they'd have the kind of sensitivity that we'd need on set when dealing with this subject matter. Everyone involved was incredibly respectful and passionate about making this film.

And did you have much of a budget to play with?

It depends on your frame of reference. I've made films all over the indie budget spectrum and it's always a challenge to work within limited means, no matter what the current



Taking a break between filming





Beau Bridges as the fearsome Bob Gault



“ WHEN I STARTED WORKING ON THIS PROJECT, I DID A LOT OF RESEARCH INTO DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING ”

definition of 'limited' is. I will say that I felt I had just the right amount of tools and personnel and the only thing I really wanted more of was time, which is always in short supply. I'm pretty scrappy as a filmmaker, and always willing to look at ways to do things more efficiently or find creative solutions, which makes me adept at working at a low-budget. But somehow I never seem to have as many hours in the day as I want.

Tell us about your actors in this film - stress-free or high-maintenance?

All of the actors were a total pleasure, and they threw themselves into their roles. Jamie (Chung) and Matt (O'Leary) especially really took a lot of risks and made themselves very vulnerable on screen. I think that kind of trust



Jamie Chung as Hyun Jae

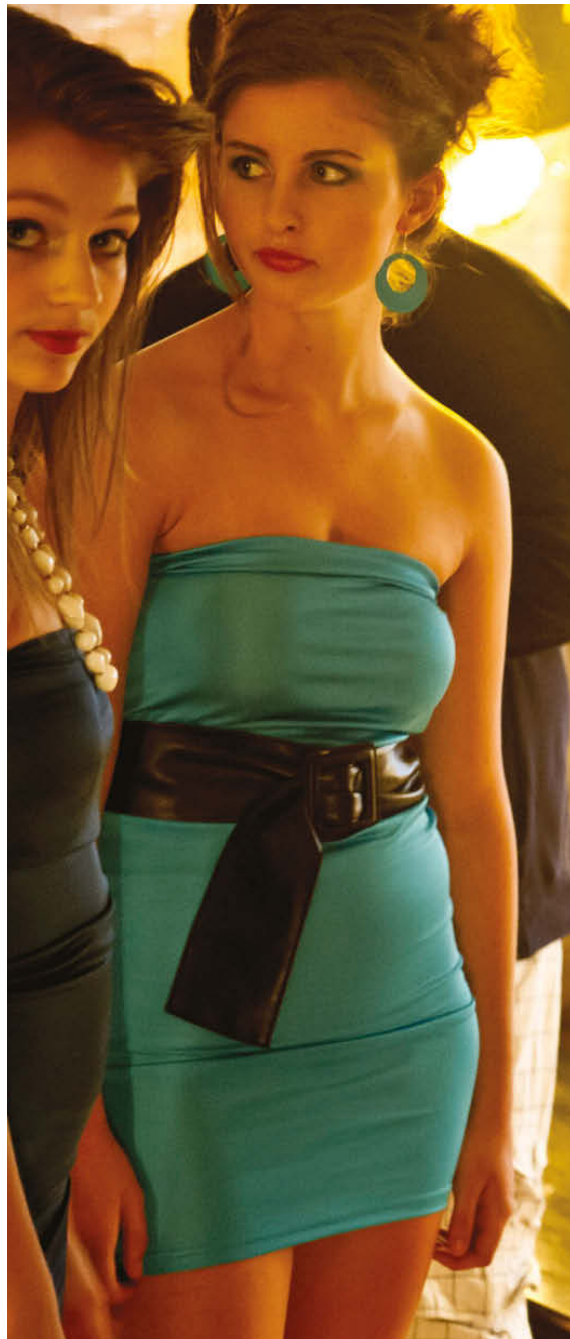
can result in amazing work, as in both of these cases. I don't think Jamie has ever had a role where she had quite so much to chew on and quite so much of the film riding on her shoulders, and she really rose to the challenge. Beau Bridges was a consummate professional as well and a total team player. I loved seeing him embrace such a cold persona, since so much of his career has been about playing good-old-boy types.

Do you have any standout memories of the production process?

I would say the toughest element of the process was just the subject matter and balancing that darkness with the kind of light-hearted, warm set that I like to run. I think our

crew did an amazing job of staying in good spirits and keeping things moving, but really quieting down and respecting the moments that were difficult for the actors. We also had a large number of minors on set, which was very challenging for me because I was often having to explain the horrible, horrible things that have happened to their characters. I don't think these girls had ever considered sex trafficking, much less thought about how to embody a trafficking victim. But many of them, and their parents who accompanied them, approached us afterwards saying how respectfully they were treated and how much they appreciated being given an opportunity to discuss these things together. It opened up a whole new process of communication on a very important topic. So I'm grateful for that.





And can you tell us about the cameras and kit that were used?

We shot on the Alexa, which I love. We had a lot of bright, sunny day exteriors and often not enough time to control the sun, so the Alexa's latitude was very useful. Our grip and electric package was pretty standard, although our key grip, Garrett Cantrell, built a homemade Russian Arm from speed rail, ratchets and lumber for a complicated car shot that my DoP Sean and I wanted. So that was probably the most exciting technical detail.

What sort of timescale was involved with this project?

Once I signed on, the whole project actually came together very quickly. The movie had already been in development for a few years, but from the time that Colin initially approached me to get involved, through to when we were shooting, was only about six months, which felt great after spending seven years getting my previous film made. We shot for 25 days in Washington and did 2 days of pick-ups in Nevada without actors a few months later.



Matt O'Leary plays the troubled Vaughan

The film has been picking up plenty of awards - how does that feel?

It's incredibly gratifying, especially when they are audience awards. When we get audience awards, that tells me that the film is resonating with people and they are taking something away with them, which is what you want an audience to do with every film, issue or no issue. The added bonus with this film is that people may actually leave the theater and take action, which would be the ultimate reward.

How does Eden sit alongside your other work to date?

It is my third feature, and I'm currently working on my fourth. I am very proud of all of them, but they are very different from each other. It's like being asked to compare your children. I love them all equally, and each one has helped my growth as a filmmaker in their own way. I hope that when viewed as a whole, they demonstrate my commitment to character, performance and authenticity, and that they show my willingness to embrace new genres.

Can you tell us a little more about the Sustainable Style Foundation?

SSF is an international organization that promotes sustainable lifestyle choices through several industries. With film, the organization works with producers to consider the impact of all the choices made in each department through all stages of production. They have something called an SSF Tag that they will grant to films who



“ I LIVE IN A TOWN THAT IS DOMINATED BY FEMALE FILMMAKERS... MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE WATER ”



make significant efforts to reduce their footprint (similar to the 'Energy Star' rating on appliances). My three most recent films have all been branded with an SSF Tag. We are working hard to find new ways with every film to reduce waste and make movies while retaining respect for the environment.

So what lies ahead for Megan Griffiths after this?

I'm currently completing the edit of a new film called Lucky Them, which we shot in Seattle in February and which stars Toni Collette, Thomas Haden Church and Oliver Platt.

Does filmmaking get easier the more work you get under your belt, or is it always an uphill struggle?

There are always challenges. Even when I look at multi-million dollar Hollywood productions, it's not as if the issues go away. The lack of money just gets replaced with the lack of creative control or what have you. I feel like I'm learning with each project and really finding confidence in my own voice, and I hope that would mean that I'm improving as a filmmaker.

Any advice for up and coming filmmakers out there?

Trust your instincts, trust your collaborators, care more than anyone else about every detail. ■



A little bit of light refreshment



A Digital Cinema camera takes the best parts of two different types of camera and combines them into something greater than the sum of its parts



cinema synergy

It was Nikon that introduced the idea of shooting video on a DSLR, and Canon that really popularised it, but it seems unlikely that either company ever thought that DSLR filmmaking would become the boom area that it has. A jaded interpretation of the concept was that it was just another feature for the box list. A more sensible analysis suggests that it was something that would be handy in a pinch for photojournalists and jobbing photographers faced with a passing and unexpected need to record video.

DSLR video has since grown to encompass Sundance-winning feature films, indie movies, big-budget TV shows and has even produced footage for Summer blockbusters such as



Avengers Assemble. But, it's not without its drawbacks - the sensors in stills cameras, no matter how large and light sensitive, are still primarily intended for photographs rather than video footage, and the chassis of a DSLR is better suited to being lifted, used and lowered repeatedly by a photographer than held in place for long periods of time by a camera-operator who is also manipulating the lens and

controls. For all that, DSLRs have been a huge hit for filmmakers, even though they're still not 100% designed for the job.

Digital Cinema cameras, on the other hand, most definitely are. From the Blackmagic BMCC to Sony's FS100 and Canon's EOS Digital Cinema range, there are now a huge number of cameras designed to offer all the advantages of shooting video on a DSLR, but with none of the drawbacks. At the same time, they also add in specific features that professional videomakers take for granted, but which have been largely unseen on DSLRs. By way of an example, we were recently fortunate to have a play with Canon's C100, the entry-level model in their EOS Digital Cinema range, and were interested to check out the ways it improved on shooting with a DSLR.

TV shows such as House have been shot using DSLRs



Sacrilegious shooting

Many DSLR shooters will be aghast at the notion, but perhaps the single most important factor in the favour of a Digital Cinema camera like the EOS100 is that you can shoot with a big depth-of-field. The DSLR video revolution was powered by booked shots, first as striking bits of 'test footage' showing up all over the internet, then as a careful way of concealing budget sets, and finally as a full blown creative choice, smearing light in interesting ways and isolating characters from their surroundings by placing them pin-sharp in front of an indistinct mise-en-scene. For a lot of DSLR shooters,



DSLRs have become well known for their depth-of-field capabilities

shallow depth-of-field is what it's all about.

Despite that, very few films can really be shot entirely with a short depth-of-field. Sooner or later you'll want an establishing shot of a location, or a moving shot in which it's impossible to maintain focus in such a narrow plane, at which point you'll need a deeper field. Sadly, this is where many DSLRs begin to suffer - their stills chips won't pick up fine detail deep in a moving image, and will begin aliasing, creating step-like edges to objects that should be perfectly straight. By using a dedicated video sensor, digital cinema cameras like the C100 can pick up the detail in a deep focus image without aliasing, and the option of bumping the ISO up to 20000 allows users to stop down heavily to open up that depth-of-field.

In the hand

The C100's chassis is in that sweet spot - it's bigger and heavier than a DSLR, which makes it slightly easier to steady and imposing enough that passers-by will give your shot a wide berth rather than video-bombing you the way they would if you were using an unimpressive little consumer camcorder. At the same time, it's smaller than most dedicated professional video cameras, and also smaller than its rangemates,

the C300 and C500, making it easier to pack and transport, and comfier for use during long handheld shoots, even without a rig.

The control layout is naturally busy, as you'd expect of a fully featured camera that can weigh in at £4000+. The controls themselves are sensibly placed and marked, and allow you to extensively manipulate the camera without having to dive into the menus, something that will have significant appeal to users of prosumer video cameras. Another area such users will be enticed by is the fact that the C100 takes EF and EF Cinema lenses, opening up an enormous range of glass to videomakers. Of course, a wide range of lenses is less impressive to DSLR users who take that sort of thing for granted, but that's where the C100 pulls some traditional video camera skills out of the bag to impress both sides of its audience.

As we've said, a big part of using large

sensor cameras is the ability to shoot with a narrow depth-of-field, but the drawback to this is the difficulty of finding and maintaining focus. The C100 can magnify your image in the viewfinder or LCD to make your composition more visible, a fact indicated so subtly on-screen that you may have bewildering moments when you forget you've switched it on and find yourself wondering why your attempt to zoom out isn't working! It also has a peaking mode that identifies the sharpest areas of the shot and highlights them, allowing you to check that you've got your edges pin-sharp. Overlaying useful information on the LCD is rare among DSLRs, but common to high-end video gear, and the C100 can also do it with your exposure, marking potentially burnt out areas of shot with a zebra pattern.

Picture profiles

On the subject of exposure, the C100 has many, many ways of playing with light, including the ability to create, save and share custom Picture Profiles. This allows you to create specific effects in-camera to reduce the amount of grading you need to do in post, or to tweak the output from a C100 to make its footage blend in nicely with footage from other cameras. Not all Picture Profiles are created equal, however, and for every glorious Art Adams profile you might find, it's equally possible to download some stinkers. So make sure you test profiles carefully before using them to shoot anything vital.

Among the inbuilt picture settings is Canon's Wide Dynamic Range setting, a gamma curve which brings the contrasts of a shot into line with what can be reproduced in a worthwhile fashion for the viewer - in essence rendering subtle variations of blacks and whites in a way we can see, rather than the more realistic but less useful approach of accurately representing all the blacks and whites in an image at their



For all that, DSLRs have been a hit for filmmakers, they're still not 100% designed for the job. Digital Cinema cameras, on the other hand, definitely are



gritty of their image processing so you don't have to think about it, Digital Cinema cameras put it front and centre, asking you to learn complex new skills and manipulate a wide range of settings in return for good results.

This can be extremely daunting when you first pick up the camera, but the comfortable form factor and familiar feel of a Canon lens ring under your fingertips goes a long way towards soothing your fears. At nearly twice the price of an EOS 5D it's expensive to move from DSLR to Digital Cinema. But, even if you close your mind to all of the more complex features, the ability to easily capture a wide variety of shot types that would be extremely difficult to get with a DSLR means that Digital Cinema cams are worth saving up for. ■

DSLR video has grown to encompass Sundance-winning feature films, indie movies, big-budget TV shows and has even produced footage for Summer blockbusters

natural intensity, something which would essentially swamp huge chunks of the image in darkness rather than revealing the detail in the shadow. The more professionally oriented Canon C-Log gamma curve can also be used on the C100, but is more likely to require grading in post-production, while the WDR setting offers a similar 12-stop range, but with less need to tinker.

Making the move

For shooters stepping up from DSLRs, much of the excitement surrounding gamma curves and Picture Profiles represents the first step onto a long, steep learning curve, but not all of the C100s features are quite so esoteric. The 'instant wins' that a digital cinema camera has over a DSLR, beyond the aforementioned depth-of-field and detail issues, are the

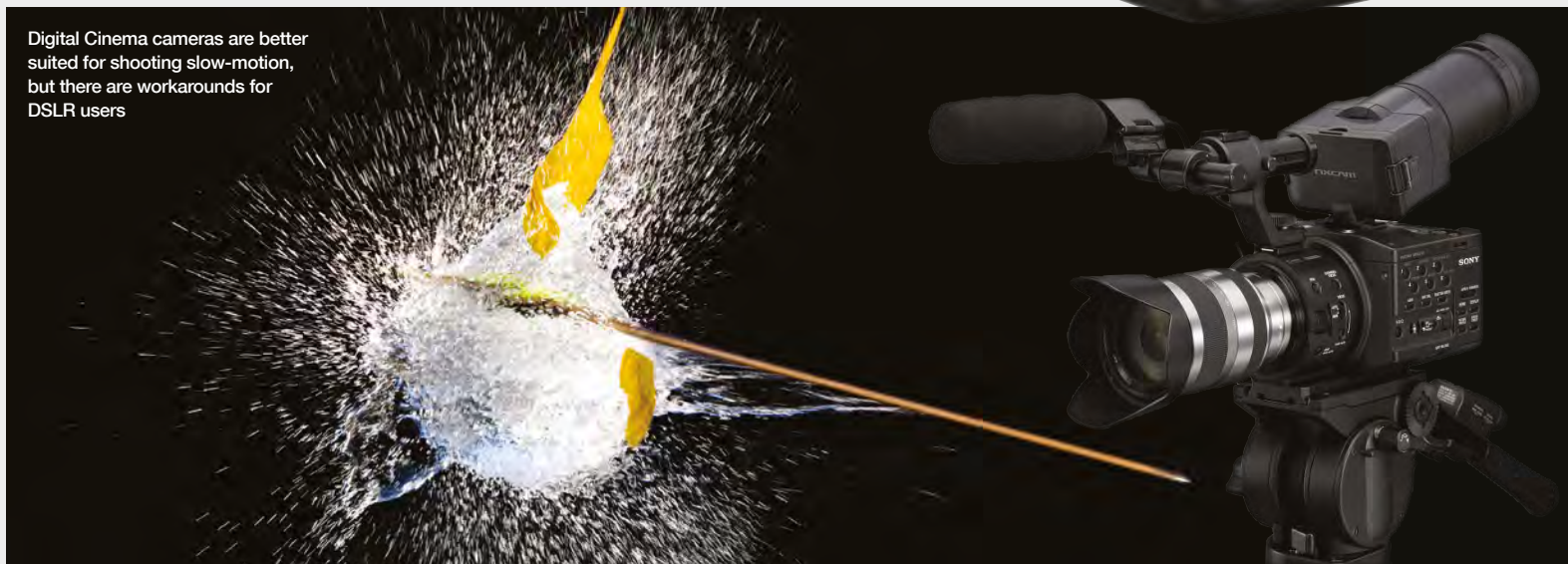
absence of a recording cut-off and the presence of an XLR input. Poor quality sound and the tendency to cut off after any extended period of continuous shooting are the two drawbacks most likely to trip up anyone shooting on a DSLR, and the C100 fixes them both. The fact that the camera has twin controllable XLR inputs fixes the old headache of 'professional video, amateur sound'.

The only really striking absence on the C100 is that of an overcrank mode for capturing slow-motion footage. There are some basic workarounds and software such as Twixtor that will allow you to create slo-mo from the C100's output, so all is not lost, but it is one of the few areas where you feel Canon might have missed a trick that its rivals haven't.

Where prosumer cameras often automate and hide away much of the technical nitty-



Digital Cinema cameras are better suited for shooting slow-motion, but there are workarounds for DSLR users



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ASK THE PRODUCER

Jonathan Sothcott, one of the UK's most prolific indie producers, answers your questions about filmmaking and the industry. He pulls no punches, but he gets films made. You can send your questions to Jonathan via email to dfm@jonathansothcott.com



What makes a short film really stand out from the crowd?

Adam, Brighton

JS: The same as a feature film - quality! Just because you're making a 5-minute piece for (probably) no money, that doesn't mean you shouldn't make it as good as you possibly can. And that doesn't mean you have to spend lots of money either. I'd rather watch a two-hander, set in one location with amazing writing and great actors, than yet another dreary zombie short with awful effects and rotten acting. Plan your short meticulously - shot list it, schedule it, recce the locations - and above all, ensure you have enough time to shoot it well. Oh, and keep it short - five good minutes is so much better than 20 minutes that drag agonisingly on.

I have a great idea/script that I know is just right for X actor/producer/director. What's the best way to approach them?

Tom, Colchester

JS: Okay, your watchword here is 'professionally' - adding them on Facebook is NOT presenting yourself in a good light - and first impressions are really important. The same goes for Tweeting at them or sending letters to their home. We all need our privacy. If you're a writer you shouldn't be attaching actors, that's a job for the producer and

casting director. It is unlikely that your ideas will match those of the filmmakers and, if they like your script, you'll have to then let said attached actor down gently. I get sent dozens of scripts, which writers tell me are

'perfect for Danny Dyer' because I make a lot of films with him - and 99% of them are anything but perfect for him. Personally, I always prefer to read a synopsis before I read a script, as I know what I'm looking for.

I have a team of talented friends and we've had some success making short films together. We now feel that we're ready to tackle a feature. Any advice?

Ben, Cromer

JS: Well done Ben, you're on your way! The most important difference between shorts and features is the time commitment - unless you're going to shoot your feature piecemeal at weekends (which is a very messy undertaking), you and your team will need to take anything between 2 and 4 weeks off work for the shoot. You'll also find that with features having commercial potential, all the freebies and favours you got on your shorts could well dry up - it doesn't take a lot for people to go all Hollywood on you! As such, you must plan the feature meticulously - it is doable, but you need to make sure that everyone can afford to commit the time necessary and that you all have written contracts. That's basically so there's no falling out further down the line when your film's a hit and you should be quaffing champagne, rather than arguing about who deserves what credit!



I'm making my first feature film and I've been told that I need to shoot it on a high-end digital camera in order for distributors and exhibitors to take it seriously. Is this true?

Richard, Manchester

JS: Absolutely not. If you're making movies on a tight budget then you can't go wrong with something like the Canon 5D, as an example. To buy, they're just over £2,000, while hire companies practically give them away. Okay, so you wouldn't shoot a \$20 million CGI action film on one (well, you might - it has been done), but if you're in that ballpark, then camera hire savings won't be top of your list of priorities. In the past, I have shot feature films on this format that have subsequently sold all over the world and been released theatrically in the USA. If you have a great DoP plus good lenses and a decent grader then 99% of people will never know. You will find that DoP's and hire companies will steer you away from the 5D and other, similar, prosumer cameras, but that is because they have very different agendas to you. Stick to your guns.



However, if you're approaching a production company, they will most likely have a submission policy on their website. Adhere to it. My company will accept unsolicited work, many will not. Some companies will only accept material submitted by agents (a policy I've always felt was a bit pompous). Whatever their policy, stick to it - and wait. Patiently. Emails don't go missing if you send them to the right address - you do NOT

need to follow up. Producers are busy, so you don't need to hound them.

If you're a filmmaker looking to attach actors, approach them through their agents. Again, not via social networking sites. Most agencies prefer email enquiries - and these you can follow up with a call if you've not heard back in a week. Be realistic though - is The Rock really going to want to be in your short film about a depressed plumber

I am delighted to say that filmmaking is one of the very rare businesses in which you need absolutely no qualifications of any kind

from Bolton? You'll also come to appreciate UK agents a lot more once you've tried dealing with their American counterparts. They are like robots. Finally, I'd like to think this goes without saying, but be polite. I have had so many emails from would be writers starting with 'my project is something a little better/cleverer/classier than you're used to' and, believe me, they go straight in the bin.

I'm making a film, which relies on people watching a programme on TV for quite a long time (a good few minutes). Can I use clips if I credit the programme makers?

Gloria, Clapham

JS: Short answer - no! Not unless they are the copyright owner and give you express permission to do so. In practice, licencing archive and library material is a prohibitively expensive practice for most filmmakers. I'm always cautious about what is called 'fair dealing' too, but that isn't relevant here. Generally speaking, the cheapest and most efficient way to do this is to film the TV programme material yourself and drop it in during post-production (or play it on the screen while shooting the scene). Obviously, this is easier on simple set-ups, such as news broadcasts, than if your characters are watching giant space robots shooting it out for the fate of the universe - but, if in doubt, change the script!



Tread carefully if you want to use clips

I've found a great location that'll work well in my new film. However, it's on private land, so should I film covertly or follow the correct procedure?

Naomi, Peterborough

JS: You should follow procedure and contact the location owner - being arrested for trespassing really isn't a lot of fun. You'll find there are three types of location owners generally - the ones who think it's all fun and will accept a nominal fee, the ones who expect £10,000 a day because they think we all have Avengers Assemble budgets and, finally, those who would rather waltz naked through the fires of hell than let you on their precious property. Always make sure that you get a location contract signed before you start filming and - above all - be respectful of where you're filming and the people that live there...After all, you never know when you might need to go back there for a pick up (or a sequel!). I once did a brilliant (e.g. cheap) location deal for a historic country mansion. Halfway through the shoot the owners realised that they could have charged a lot more and became totally obstinate - 'losing' keys, making noise and all the rest of it. After we wrapped, they decided to try and rump us for a load of entirely fictional damages, submitting an insane bill for tens of thousands of pounds (there was no damage) and with all the usual threats of going to the papers (because a gaffer allegedly scuffing a bedroom wall is serious front page stuff). I stood firm on this because a deal's a deal and, in the end, common sense prevails. But, it was a protracted headache that I could have done without - so tread carefully!



I've met a potential investor who will put money into my feature film if he can play the lead. Should I accept, or is this madness?

Jack, Glasgow

JS: This is the film industry's equivalent of the bargain of Lucifer. And, sadly, this is becoming increasingly prevalent in the UK film business. Of course, there are some established actors who also produce their films in order to maintain creative control - Noel

Clarke is a good example of this. But there are others, often prolific in their output, who waste so much money and effort on vanity projects. The industry doesn't pay them much attention and neither should you.

Ask yourself two questions - would you give them the lead - or even any role - without the investment/finance? And, why do they need to buy their parts? I suspect the answers are (a) no and (b), because they aren't very good.

Unfortunately, film finance is thin on the ground and this gives an opportunity to those with cash to try and buy their way to fame (and it is generally fame that they're after in this world of cheap, reality TV 'celebrity'). I would tell you to avoid this like the plague - the investor will never be happy, because once people see the film they'll be found out and fame and fortune won't beckon...and your film will be sunk by a terrible central performance.

I saw a fantastic movie on TV last night and would like to remake it - how do I go about securing the rights?

JS: This is something that shouldn't be undertaken lightly - remake rights are a complex and often maddening path to tread, particularly on older films where



Don't forget to seek permission on private land

What's the deal with filming in public spaces with lots of people around? Do I have to ask their permission?

Colin, Aberdeen

JS: The general rule is that so long as you can't clearly identify them then you're okay. Of course, the biggest problem you'll have on your hands are those oh-so-funny wags who love to mug for the camera, because, after all, we're all there for a laugh rather than to make a film. Smile sweetly and try and have a runner distract the baboons because they always know their rights and, if you don't distract them, they'll just become even more of a headache!



copyrights have drifted or even lapsed (Night of the Living Dead is the most famous example of this, though be aware that most so-called 'public domain' films aren't, and a battalion of lawyers will descend upon you, should you attempt to

infringe copyright). That said, the internet is your friend and so many rights-holding companies now have an online presence. So, step 1 is to trace the copyright holder. Step 2 is convincing them to give you an option (usually 12-18 months)



on these rights to attempt to finance the project. You'll need an option agreement drafted by a lawyer (or there might be a cheeky template or two, again, on the internet) setting out the terms of the option. The option could cost you £1 or it could cost you £1 million - it all depends on the perceived value of the rights. And, copyright owners often over-value what they have, which adds a whole new layer of difficulty to the proceedings! But, if you can get an option then you're halfway there - now you just have to find the money to actually make the film...and that's a whole different question entirely!

I'm a keen filmmaker but have no formal qualifications. Can I make it, or should I consider further education?

Steve, Macclesfield

JS: I am delighted to say that filmmaking is one of the very rare businesses in which you need absolutely no qualifications of any kind. I have a handful of GCSE's and - despite one particularly evil teacher's smug end of term report comment that I'd only make anything of myself if my life involved "more science and less science fiction" - I seem to be doing okay. There, are, of course, dozens of courses, seminars and so forth, but I am a great believer in practical experience drastically outweighing theory. You have to learn from your mistakes, because nothing as creative as making movies is ever going to go exactly to plan (and in many cases that can be part of the fun). If you want to be a filmmaker then you have to create your own opportunities by making films - get out there and shoot something! ■

You just have to learn from your mistakes, because nothing as creative as making movies is ever going to go exactly to plan

PRODUCING & DIRECTING A MICRO-BUDGET FEATURE FILM **PART 2**

In the second of a two-part feature, director and producer Sean J Vincent shares the lessons learned after making a pair of micro-budget films



Sean J Vincent

In part one (last issue), we looked at the differences between producing and directing micro-budget movies. This time, we're going to look at how to direct once filming has begun - how to run an efficient set, and how to make sure you get the best from your cast and crew. Everyone else involved should know what they are responsible for and what they need to achieve, but they will all be looking to you for answers. I often find that directing is a lot about answering questions. Everyone from the actors to the sound guy to the catering people will want to know stuff on

an almost irrepressible basis. On larger shoots with multiple producers, assistant directors and department heads, a lot of those questions will be dealt with by other people, but on small indie films, it's going to be you. On top of answering all the questions, you actually need to get the film shot!

By the time you get to the shoot there a few things you should have ready to go:

- A detailed schedule and shot list
- A copy of the script in a hard folder
- Paper copies of your insurance certificate and details
- Any risk assessments needed for specific location shoots
- iPad or paper copies of scene blocking for the day's shoot

The difference between shooting on a controlled set and on an outside location is huge. Whilst shooting *The Addicted*, we were in one indoor location for nearly the whole shoot, so we had a green room, permanent lighting set-up and no need to have to move at any point. That means we could work quickly

without losing time packing things up and moving every day. However, you still need to factor in time for blocking, detailed lighting, mic placement and setting up of the camera for each shot. You also need to check with the make-up people to see how long they need to get the actors ready. Being a horror film, we often had people in make-up for over an hour and sometimes more. This all pushes back the time that you can start shooting. We needed to start shooting at around 8pm each night once





MOOD BOARD/BOOK

Getting your vision across to the rest of the team is often quite tricky. Your interpretation of 'A Dark British Thriller' might be entirely different from someone else's. A mood board or mood book is a great way to share your vision of how a film will look and feel. Collect photos from online and take pictures of things you think represent the look and feel you want and print them out. I usually have a mood board in the office and a mood book to take to meetings and keep on-set. There's a great website for this very thing called: <http://www.moodshare.co/>



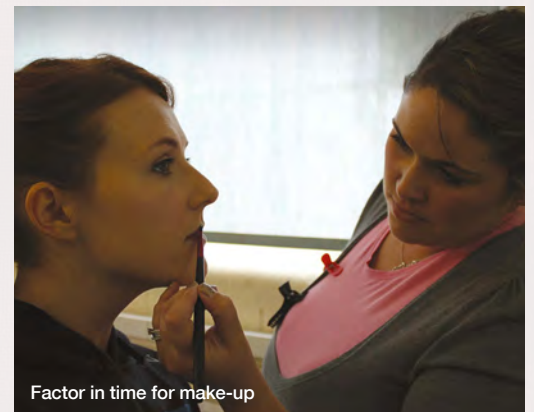
it had got dark, but that still involved everyone arriving on-set at 5pm in order to have everything ready to begin at 8pm.

What are my responsibilities?

Ultimately, it's your job to get the film made. On the set, this means giving everyone what they need to get their jobs done. Actors will need direction, camera and lighting departments will need to understand your vision - they need to know what you are trying to achieve with each shot. Good directors will generally be good communicators. It's vital to understand the importance of giving people the right information. It's common for



directors to spend a lot of time talking to the performers, making them understand how they want the characters to be played and possibly giving them extra information that isn't in the script in order to get the best performance. But, it's also important to give similar attention to all the other departments. Just because you're working on a micro-budget with only



Factor in time for make-up

Directing is all about good communication



you directing and operating the camera, it doesn't mean that everyone else can just follow your lead. If you tell the cast and crew (however small) what you are trying to achieve, it's likely that you will avoid problems before they occur. Don't be afraid to take advice on-set. Some performers may have been on more film sets than you and they might have some good suggestions. My advice would be to make it clear to everyone that you are open to suggestions and advice, but not in front of everyone else. They can take you to one side. That way, you don't look bad in front of everyone and they don't look stupid when you reject their idea - it protects everyone.



happens that you don't like. There's no point in wasting time or storage space shooting a take if you know you can't use it. Tell your actors and crew what was wrong and get everyone to reset for another take. Keep the energy up...be positive and when they do a good take, tell them. Sometimes the cast might need encouragement or direction while the scene is shooting. If this is the case, tell your sound department that's what you're planning, if possible. They may decide to record the dialogue if necessary directly after the take, when you're not shouting all over it!

“ BE CONFIDENT... TOO MUCH HEAD SCRATCHING AND PEOPLE WILL WONDER IF YOU'RE RIGHT FOR THE JOB ”

How to start a take

When everyone is ready, the lights are on, and the cast is at starting positions, how do you control a 'take'? First of all, make sure you are happy with how things look on the monitor or camera screen. There's no point in shooting anything if you're not sure. Next, call out that you are preparing to roll. Call 'roll sound', then 'roll

camera'...then finally 'action!'. I know a lot of first time directors struggle with the shouting bit. They often feel daft shouting 'action' and 'cut'. Well, that's your job...so get used to it. It makes it perfectly clear to everyone that you are filming and you need quiet, you need their attention and most of all, that you are running things. Don't be afraid to shout 'cut' as soon as something



Let the actors act



Finding the magic

When you're filming a performance, now and again, if you're lucky, something magic will happen. Maybe it's a look a character gives, or a slightly different way of delivering the dialogue or maybe they go off script all together, but for whatever reason, it works. How can you maximize your chances of getting this kind of screen magic? Let the actors act. Give them some wiggle-room in



THE SHOOTING SCRIPT

This is the script that YOU will work from. It's the same as everyone else's, except you will have extra information on there for camera positions, lens choices, grip requirements and other technical information. It will also have any other notes you need on-set. I also like to mark on the top of each page what props are required. I share this version of the script with the rest of the crew and it becomes the 'bible' for the production. Keep it in a ring binder or something similar that is easy to replace pages in and will prevent it from getting tatty on-set. Alternatively, keep it all on an iPad.



the performance. Make sure you leave it just a few seconds longer before you shout 'cut'... those last moments of a take can be amazing sometimes. Another good piece of advice is to watch the characters that aren't directly involved in the scene. Maybe there's a reaction happening that you weren't planning on and covering that could really work in the edit? Be open to the possibility that you didn't envisage the scene in the best possible way and once on-set, another possibility opens up.

Schedule versus art/perfection

As the director, you are the boss. It's up to you to decide when it's acceptable to overrun. If you know for certain that you cannot extend your shooting days, then schedule must overtake anything else. Does this mean that you have to sacrifice perfection and your artistic vision? Sometimes, yes. A micro-budget film is just that. You can and should aim to make the best possible film you can, but you must be realistic. I would have loved to be able to

spend twice as long on most of the scenes in *The Addicted*, but we just didn't have the money to spend that kind of time on it. It's vital that everyone in the production knows how important time is. Sitting around drinking tea



Optimise your shooting time



Be confident about your decisions

and discussing lighting set-ups is great, but I've rarely had the time to do that once production starts. If a scene is finished shooting, the next one is getting set up and, as director, they will need you to be there to make sure everything is set right. It's in situations like this that you will appreciate the assistance of a first AD. Someone who can take the pressure off you and be your eyes and spokesman when you need to be elsewhere.

Morale and emotional support

Making a film is tough. The crew will be tired a lot of the time and the cast will be both tired and often emotionally 'spent'. You need to keep this in mind and make sure you schedule regular breaks. Have tea and coffee and snacks available at all times and use the time between set-ups to allow the cast to rest and refresh themselves. This isn't wasting time, it's giving you a better chance of keeping morale up and having a cast and crew who will be still up for working when it's late/wet/cold/snowing and all the rest of it. Main meals are also important. On tiny budgets where everyone is pitching in, people will be fine with microwave-ready meals and pizzas. But on longer shoots, with slightly bigger budgets, it's important to feed people properly. Takeaways are very expensive and buying good food in bulk can be relatively good value as long as you've got both somewhere to store it and somewhere to cook it. Ignore

catering at your peril. Hungry equals grumpy... and you don't want grumpy on set.

Make confident decisions

If you want to get the best from people and make a great film, you need to be confident about your decisions on-set. It'll show everyone that you know what you are doing and they will trust you. Too much head scratching and people will wonder if you're right for the job.

That doesn't mean you need to be arrogant, just confident, and be honest with yourself. I know from experience that when watching footage back on-set, if there are any nagging doubts that you haven't nailed the scene yet, those doubts will only grow over time. Re-shoot there and then, until you are happy or until you absolutely have to move on. Your crew will be asking your opinion about everything. Be quick and firm about your answers. Try to know

Actors need the occasional break





Re-shoot if things don't look right

ahead of time how you want each scene lit and how you want the camera to move.

If you haven't properly shared your vision for the scene you are working on, or how it flows into the following scene, your cast and crew might struggle to understand what you are doing. This was made obvious to me while shooting *The Addicted*. We had a technical problem, which meant none of the camera batteries were charging and only I could go and find a replacement in the middle of the night. I left the cast and crew with some instructions on how I wanted the scene they were setting up to be shot. About half an hour after I left, I got a phone call from the sound guy telling me to hurry back as arguments had

broken out over what was the right way to film the scene. When I got back, they were all disagreeing about what was needed. I cleared up the issue and got the scene shot in minutes. It's not that I'm any better than the rest of the crew, I just hadn't explained in enough detail why I wanted it shot a certain way and other people thought there was a better way of doing it.

It's a wrap

Directing an indie movie is a huge privilege, but it is also a very stressful occupation. I can't emphasise enough how important planning and preparation is. Regular meetings with your team will make sure everyone is on the same

SET BLOCKING DIAGRAMS

Blocking is the process of deciding where the actors will be and where their 'marks' are. It's also knowing where the camera will move to during a shot. In the past, this meant paper drawings or sometimes a whiteboard, but these days we have the iPad. There's an app called 'Shot Designer', which is fantastic. It allows you to easily draw your sets and add lighting, camera positions and the cast, and then move them around and generate images, which you can then share with everyone else. It's well worth a look and all helps to keep the production paperless.



page and making sure everyone on-set is aware of what you are trying to achieve means that there's less chance of you ending up with a completely different movie to the one you envisaged. The last piece of advice is just get out there and do it. There's nothing stopping you directing your own film and doing it is the best way to learn. ■

“ THE LAST PIECE OF ADVICE IS JUST GET OUT THERE AND DO IT. THERE'S NOTHING STOPPING YOU ”



Filmmaking takes it out of you



DIRECCION SEG. ESTADO
-FRONTERAS-
JULY 02 2013
ENTRADA
C CAYA (BADAJOZ)

**DON'T
FORGET
YOUR
PASSPORT**

Production value! Production value! Production value! If there's one thing that'll make your filmmaking project look expensive, it's multiple locations.

The first-time filmmaker tends to shoot a horror set in one house because it's cheap. However, if you want to 'open up' your film, you need a variety of (preferably sexy) locations to set your scenes in. Moving from place to place gives your story a sense of pace and movement that you lose if your characters are stuck in the same room the entire time. Something I often like to do is set part of a film in another country - not only does it make the story feel a bit bigger, but you are automatically taking your characters out of their comfort zone, making things more interesting.



ARRIVAL  ARRIVAL
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES
JULY 12 2013

Paul Tanter offers advice on how to add big-budget production values to your next filmmaking project just as long as you're prepared to be a little bit inventive



“THE CITY OF NEW YORK LOVES FILM PRODUCTIONS COMING TO THE CITY, SPENDING THEIR MONEY”

Get out there

After my film *The Rise & Fall of a White Collar Hooligan* did well on DVD and Video on Demand last year, Momentum very wisely requested a sequel and we were more than happy to oblige. The general rule of sequels is ‘the same, but different’, and we tried to apply that here. The last film was firmly placed in London, with a brief excursion to Paris, somewhere I’d filmed before for the Jack Says/Said/Falls series. It was also an accurate reflection of what the real life credit card scammer the film was based on had experienced.

He had been caught abroad emptying cash machines with cloned bank cards and, whilst his gang escaped, he was sent down and served time abroad. The one change I made from reality was that, whilst in reality he was caught in Berlin, I changed it to Paris. Why? Purely to make sure the audience recognised it. Most east european towns and cities have a distinct lack of landmarks and look eerily similar. Shooting in Paris meant the films travelling scenes could be done on the Eurostar (easier to guerrilla), were easier, quicker and cheaper to get to (essential for a low budget production), and looked great (vital for any film).

Exotic locations

I’ve shot films in a variety of exotic locales including Los Angeles, Paris, Krakow,

Amsterdam, Portsmouth. But *White Collar Hooligan 2* was my biggest production yet in terms of scope and location. It starts in Spain, moves to New York before finally returning to London for the final showdown. I’d never filmed in New York or Spain before and both were a learning experience. Shooting abroad throws up so many unexpected pitfalls, but the reward of what ends up on the screen is worth the effort.

Be prepared! This is the most obvious bit of advice, but still something that can come back and bite you on the behind. Plan your shoot meticulously to make the most of every second you have abroad. In reality, very few of your interiors need to be filmed abroad unless there’s a view from the window you can’t avoid, or want to make a feature of the scene. *White Collar Hooligan 2* features an extended interior with





Filming on the go in Marbella

Nick Nevern and Simon Phillips shot on location in New York, because of the view of the New York skyline in the background. But the interior that follows on from that scene was shot in the UK, because we didn't need to see outside and needed every moment in the Big Apple to shoot just New York.

This was a lesson I learned the hard way on Jack Falls. We had numerous scenes in Amsterdam and shot the interiors there -

sometimes with curtains closed to help lighting. Every single one of Doug Bradley's scenes in Jack Falls could have been shot in the UK rather than Amsterdam, but we learned from that and make sure we schedule more diligently now.

Close at hand

Preparation boils down to the very basic. On the morning we flew out to Spain, my DoP, Haider Zafar, arrived at the airport to find he



had left his passport at home and had to miss our flight. Fortunately he was able to get a flight later that day and arrived while we were blocking the scene. We were lucky that there was another flight available! Make sure you pack enough equipment in your hand luggage so you can still start shooting if your luggage goes astray. Your camera, lenses, cards and some batteries should stay in your hand luggage at all times.

Utilise the local knowledge and resources that already exist. You wouldn't climb Everest without Sherpa's or follow the Inca Trail without a guide, so get yourself a local fixer as a point of contact and your very own tour guide. When shooting abroad, we frequently co-produce with a local production company and hire a local Production Manager. Having them as your point of contact with the locations, crew and any local cast you hire will make the planning process from thousands of miles away much easier.

Plan in advance

Our New York Production Manager, Elana, shortlisted NY-based actors audition videos for us to view online and choose from, booked a local sound recordist, make-up artist and runners. She also sorted locations and street permits before we even landed. Her knowledge as a New York-based filmmaker was invaluable to us and her contacts paid off, gaining us the entire 30th floor of a Manhattan skyscraper with stunning views to shoot one of our key scenes in. Only taking department heads and hiring the rest locally means huge savings on your travel costs.

Ensure you know the relevant differences in technology between home and abroad before you go, or take someone who does. Shooting in the US, we found that the US mains electricity runs at 60Hz, not 50Hz like it does over here. This means the flicker in the light systems (which is not detectable to the human eye) is happening 60 times a second, rather than 50 times a second. This flicker is most noticeable in florescent systems, as incandescent ones stay hot enough to shine fairly consistently as the current alternates.



Shooting in Los Angeles

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Our cameras, however, were recording at 25 frames-per-second (or technically 50 fields-per-second), so there was a slight mis-match in the numbers (50-60). This resulted in what's called 'banding' - where dark bands appear to move up or down the image because the camera shutter is not opening and closing in time with the flicker of the light source. We could have fixed this by switching to 30 frames-per-second (or technically 60 fields-per-second), but knew we'd encounter sound sync problems and other delivery issues in post-production. So, our workaround this was to stay at 25fps but reduce our shutter speed to 1/30. This didn't eliminate the problem, but made it less noticeable. We also tried to stay away from any florescent lighting!



Filming in Manhattan

Playing the game

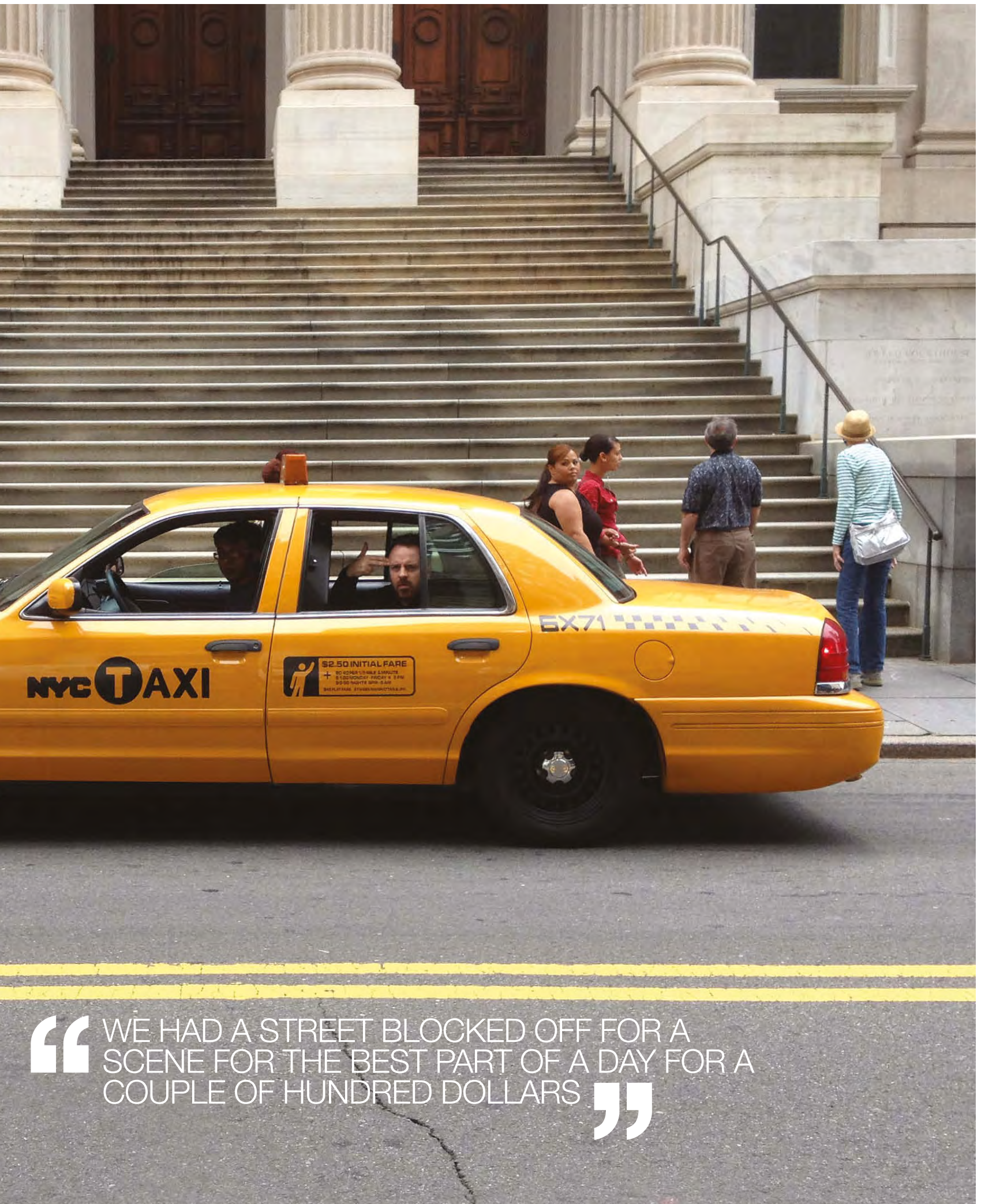
Permits and permissions are much easier to acquire than you think. The City of New York loves film productions coming to the city, spending their money on hotels and in shops, along with hiring local crew. They do their best to make it as easy and cheap as possible. We had a street blocked off for a scene for the best part of a day for a couple of hundred dollars, and that included paying a city cop to block the end. Having said that; while some permits may be easy to get, it's always worth going guerrilla sometimes too. There was no way that we would be able to shut down Times Square for our steadicam shot through the middle of it, so we simply waited until the early



Taking direction in Spain

hours of the morning when it was (relatively, for New York) quiet, and shot the scene then. The police were nearby, but more interested in catching troublemakers than our small film crew not bothering anyone.

And, if you're somewhere that's often filmed, look for some decent stock footage of the place. We combined our own city shots with existing stock footage and the result is some fantastic production value for a low-budget film. Shooting most of *White Collar Hooligan 2* abroad may have been challenging and required a great deal of planning, but what matters is what ends up on the screen. We got a film that has a bigger and more international feel than other British independents. Above all though, don't be discouraged - just do it! ■



“ WE HAD A STREET BLOCKED OFF FOR A SCENE FOR THE BEST PART OF A DAY FOR A COUPLE OF HUNDRED DOLLARS ”

MONEY FOR OLD ROPE

Can anyone become a film producer? Digital FilmMaker meets Mark Kenna to find out...



Mark Kenna is a producer with 16 years of filmmaking behind him. How did he get started?

With a background in film over the past 16 years, producing was a natural step for me. The more I worked on other projects in various countries around the world, talking to directors, producers, studio and cinema owners as well as being at the heart of the digital revolution, the more experience I gained. I wanted to get my teeth into my own projects, choosing my own teams of people,

implementing ideas and guiding the project in the direction that I thought would be best. I was also keen on the idea of nurturing talent in the UK, utilising industry professionals locally, outside of the capital city and was encouraged to see the UKFC (now Creative England/ BFI/Film London) promoting this concept of sustainable filmmaking and nurturing talent. I started my post-production studio in 2009, working on sound for micro-budget films, shorts and commercial projects, as well as offering corporate film production for cinema.

Did you consciously pursue production as a career move?

My background before film and sound was in electronic engineering; training at Rolls Royce was a great foundation not only for engineering, but also for quality, standards and practice, not to mention fault finding and problem solving. I studied at the University of York, specialising in acoustics and psychoacoustic, music technology, hardware and software for music and film industry. I was also interested in digital

Recording the Wootton Bassett
Rocks charity music video



techniques, specialising in digital signal processing (DSP), manipulating audio and researching digital hearing aid technology. However, each time I came across talent, I just wanted to nurture it, promote it, and make something happen. I've always been this way, appreciating talented artists in all walks of life. My background in engineering, electronics, software, sound and film has given me an alternative skill-set that allows me to deal with the issues that a producer needs to understand, from a creative level, technical level and a financial level. I occasionally get asked, 'What does the



Can you explain the qualities that you think help to make a good producer?

There are many qualities that a producer needs on a day-to-day basis, from understanding a creative vision to seeing and

overcoming problems before they happen and implementing solutions in real-time. Working well with people, listening to what everyone wants and giving people what they need. Being firm with finance, budgets and time. Deadlines are paramount in films - no deadline and no film. To understand each section of the pre-production, production and post-production stages, including creative control and input, marketing and PR through to finance, sales, acquisition and law, as well as exhibition and festivals including distribution. If you are weak in any of these areas, then you really should have a co-producer or partner that can advise you on these parts. It really is your responsibility that the project is made correctly, safely, on time, on budget, with a sales and marketing strategy, roll-out and distribution plan, as well as winning and dining investors, talking intelligently about the equipment and processes. This is what I love, the challenge of the whole project and seeing it come together.

What are the pros and cons of this line of work?

As always, there's probably the same number of pros as cons, but as I'm an extremely optimistic person, I like to focus on the positives, such as the daily rewards of seeing something special coming together that just wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for your time, energy and passion. Being involved in every aspect of filmmaking and overseeing pretty much most decisions. Working with such a varied bunch of talented people and professionals and creating a quality product that represents the British film industry, which everyone can be proud of. The downside is that you're required for every decision, so you have to manufacture hours in the day to complete everything that needs to be done. If



Producing requires teamwork

producer do?'. Well, for me, the question should be 'What doesn't the producer do?'. The producer is the person that finds the project, takes an idea and runs with it, controlling and driving the concept forward, along with pulling together a great team that can deliver the creative vision of the director. A good producer should really understand all elements of filmmaking, advising when to cut corners and when not to deviate. To appreciate a great team, maintaining communication and keeping the project together, on schedule and within budget.



On the set of Facility 31



you don't do it, it may not get done. So the long days can take its toll on you, your body and your family, but it can be managed and it's up to you to take control and ensure you work quickly and efficiently, working towards that balance. I'm still working on this, but it's getting a little easier, especially with a great team around you. It's always more difficult at the start, say a project development would typically have 3-4 people, whereas Facility

31 has had 2 people, pretty much making it all happen. Highly rewarding, but sometimes overwhelming and a little exhausting at times.

Can you tell us about the work you've produced to date?

My first big project as a producer was the Wootton Bassett Rocks charity music video, involving over 1,000 local people of Royal Wootton Bassett in a single, continuous shot. That took a few months to plan, a day to shoot and a month post-production to produce a DCP with a 5.1 soundtrack that could be played in cinemas. We had a cast and crew screening with press too. That was just a real highlight. We released the video and within the first 3 days, we'd had 40,000 hits on YouTube and had reached No.4 in the iTunes rock chart and even made it to ITV national news and the Canadian news too! However, things went a little wrong and we had to pull the video, get legal advice and re-upload a new video, losing all the marketing and embedding from the initial push. This was a real low point, after such a successful launch, but that's the way it goes sometimes. It's times like these that you can really make a difference, you can hold the team together,



“THE LONG DAYS CAN TAKE ITS TOLL ON YOU, YOUR BODY AND YOUR FAMILY BUT IT CAN BE MANAGED”



Working hard on the Wootton Bassett Rocks charity music video

march on and solve the problems and just don't look back, don't compromise the quality or the project and learn of course. You're always learning, but never look back. The charity music video went on to raise £40,000 for our 4 selected charities and considering I worked for free on this project, I certainly wasn't doing it for the money. It really was a great project to be a part of.

We completed a corporate film early this year too. We filmed with the Red One again, this time in a studio on green-screen over 2 days. This was a very special project in many ways as it was fully inclusive, involving the customers with special needs to act in the film; they came into the studio to create Foley and sound effects. The people who worked at the company made the music and we also had a premier at the cinema, this time with the BBC interviewing us all. It really did look great; it had subtitles, a BSL signer and even had voice description for the visually impaired. Cineworld in Whitney were extremely supportive and have invited us back for future projects.

I've also started a production company and produced the British horror feature Facility 31. It's set in a secret military bunker, which is an amazing place to shoot a British horror feature with minimal locations, rich



Mark Kenna oversees the filming of Facility 31

interiors and a fantastic ambience. My idea was to gather an experienced team together and shoot a high-quality investment trailer for the cinema. This would take time, but would show our concept, demonstrate the talent we have and help us work towards the feature, allowing us to scale up the production once the project is green-lit without many surprises. We learnt so much during this process; we

selected a great cast and crew that really pulled out something special over the two days of filming. We had 27 people on-set for the shoot, 8 cast and 19 crew as well as an additional team of concept artists, vfx, sound, web and app guys. The final trailer was graded by Technicolor and has, so far, been very well received. We are currently completing financials and will start to meet with investors



Smile time at the BBC

we have a few lined up. However, we are looking for further investors to come on-board and possible co-productions to work with going forward.

Are there any pitfalls that beginners need to watch out for?

I would say that there are many potential pitfalls for beginners, but do your homework and have a valid reason for making the film, as when you're down and out, you really need to believe in your project and occasionally carry it to the next level, sometimes on your own. You need to be paying people - don't fall into the trap that anyone can make a film without money. Yes, anyone can make a film that nobody wants to see with no budget, but to make a film that is going to entertain the audience, make them part with their hard-earned cash, you'd better start thinking like a businessman. Make a quality product, something that will sell and earn a profit. Even if the film doesn't make it big, you should be covering your



Completing a day in the studio



Royal Wootton Bassett rises to the occasion

costs and getting a return for the investors, or else how are you going to make the next one? Surround yourself with other like-minded, talented people. This pays dividends and can make or break a project. It's always good to work in a happy environment, your crew will be with you for many weeks, so ensure you handle them with care. Look after them and ensure that communication is open at all times - it's important for everyone to feel part of the team, feel confident in what they're doing and

feel that their own creativity is being valued. Make sure you have an audience waiting for your film - know that audience and what they're looking for. Challenge your filmmaking ideas and techniques and don't be afraid to do something a little different. In fact, good things often happen in a creative environment where many professionals come together and overcome challenges and practical problems. Think about sound on-set and don't wait until post-production. Control the environment

if possible and listen to your team - if they need something, there's probably a good reason. Delegate tasks, ensure your HoD's are well prepared and informed. After all, we're all trying to produce content that is in the directors head. It should be clear to everyone before you're on-set what needs to be done on a daily basis. If you do this, then you won't go far wrong. You're always going to make mistakes along the way, but this is really the only way to learn.



Do you have any top tips for aspiring film producers?

I would suggest making short films as soon as you can, and get used to working in small, efficient teams. Enter competitions such as the 48Hr Sci-Fi challenge, 0117Hr Filmmakers challenge and so on. Fundamental to the whole process is finding a good story. Once you have this, gather your team of like-minded people, skilled professionals and start putting a business plan together demonstrating what you plan to do, how you're going to do it and, most importantly, set yourself a deadline. Without this, your film just isn't going to get made. Think about all aspects of your film, from the story, script and development to post-production, marketing and distribution and come up with costs based on these



various stages of your project and try to obtain a realistic budget for your project. Understand the markets, networking, festivals and grants/funding available. This may really help you early on in the project. The UK film industry wants to nurture up-and-coming filmmaking talent and has funds available to help you develop a script, your project and even funds to help you finish your project. Whatever approach you take, just get out there and do



it. It's so easy to sit about chatting about how you're going to make the best film ever, it's going to make loads of money and you can make it with little or no-budget. However, this just isn't realistic.

Do you prefer to work with the same kit and crew each time, or does it depend on the production?

I think once you have built your team, you really want to keep that team going forward. Of course, depending on projects, this may not always be possible, but when the team is good, it's fantastic and makes not only the shoot professional and exciting, but an enjoyable place to work. We had amazing feedback on the set of Facility 31 with many of the cast and crew asking when the feature is taking place as they really enjoyed the shoot and can't wait to get back together. This was a very proud moment and something that I strive for on every project. With regards to equipment, I think that you have to use the best of what's available within your budget. You should know the pros and cons of kit and have a great team that can

advise you on what's required and what's optional. As long as you know the workflow, understand what each piece of kit can do and possible workarounds, then kit shouldn't really be an issue. It shouldn't get in the way of making a great looking film. We shot our investment trailer using the Sony FS700 for example, with a pix240 capturing pro-res and graded on a base-light at Technicolor. The result is astonishing, especially that the camera was a £8k model giving professional results. Of course, we had great lighting, a great DoP and production design that made everything look excellent in front of the camera. Therefore, what we captured could be manipulated in post-production, but nothing was missing.

The key is always to do as much as you can in front of the lens, leaving more room for tweaks in post. You should never rely upon post-production time to fix issues on-set. If you need to re-shoot a scene, take some additional shots, or perhaps switch off the air-conditioning unit to lower the noise on-set, then do it. If you think of it, do it, as it will only come back and tend to bite you in post-production otherwise. ■



Hanging out with Simon Weston OBE



More hugs at BBC Wiltshire

FILMING IN LOW LIGHT

Tom Paton has to regularly tackle the perils of low light filming and here he reveals how best to work around this common and often hugely frustrating issue



For more details about Tom Paton check out his blog at www.tpakproductions.com or follow him on Twitter @TPAKproductions



Low light filming is a dark art, which even Voldemort would have difficulty mastering.

There are many pitfalls to navigate your way around and choosing the right camera will certainly help steer you in the right direction. There is no denying though, that if handled well, there is a certain beauty in capturing that which is difficult to see, and its applications are endless. Whether you are making a documentary, a horror film or even a promotional video for an event, learning to control your camera in low light, like a Jedi controls the force, will give your piece that competitive edge.

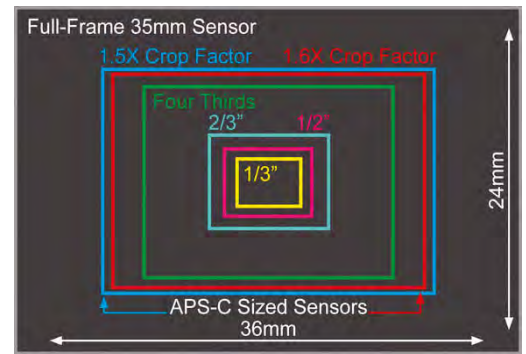
When getting to grips with filming in low light you're going to be looking at three things in particular - ISO, shutter speed and aperture. ISO is the real devil in this trio and, unfortunately, pretty much every camera on the market has different results at different ISO's, so you're going to need to get on the fountain of knowledge that is YouTube and look at comparisons to see which camera works best for you. ISO is basically how you adjust the light sensitivity of your camera sensor - the higher your ISO, then the more sensitive in low light it will be. However, there are dangers in using higher ISO's, the number one of which is noise. Once you have a noisy image there isn't much you can do with it without softening the shot.

By no means should you be scared of high ISO's though. The advances in technology have been huge in the past two years and I have cameras that can comfortably film a perfectly clean image at ISO 3200, which was all but unheard of just 10 years ago. There is a lot of content online dedicated to grilling people about attaining a clean image and its importance. I for one, however, do not always agree with that. There are scenarios where actually getting the shot is much more important than worrying about a fine grain in the image, especially if you're filming a live event or a documentary. I will throw my

hands up and say honestly that there are a lot of occasions where I will film at ISO 12800; it just depends on what type of camera you are using (I'll get to that shortly).

Check your settings

Shutter speed is really a piece-of-cake, and remains the same whether you are filming in low light or down the beach on a bright summer's day. Your shutter speed should always be double your frame rate. If you are shooting 25fps then your shutter should be at 50, so on and so fourth. If you shoot with your shutter speed set to high it will make the image darker, which is the opposite of what we are looking to do here.



'Why not make the shutter speed lower then?' I hear you cry! The lower your shutter speed, then the more motion blur you will get. This can be a very disconcerting effect for a viewer and should be avoided in my opinion. Also, in the case of filming in low light conditions where the event may have minimal lighting as part of the production, if your shutter is set to the wrong speed you may notice some heavy banding in the form of flickering lines. So this is another reason you're going to want to make sure you've got the shutter speed correct.

Tackling aperture

Next up, we have aperture, which is basically the opening that lets light through from your lens to the sensor and also controls the amount of depth-of-field within the image. If you are looking to give your low light shots that polished, cinematic quality, then you



Anyone here got a light?

are going to need some lenses with a low F-stop (which is the term used to describe the aperture of the lens). The lower the F-stop, the more light will get through from the lens to the sensor. My kit bag is full of nice, sharp prime lenses with a low aperture of F1.2/F1.4. Coupled with the right camera for the job, these lenses help me to produce some beautiful images in the dimmest of conditions.

Using the kit lens that came with your camera will unfortunately just not cut it. They can look great in daylight, but if you want to be the camera equivalent of Riddick, you're going to have to invest in the right glass. Anything over F2.8 is going to be a struggle and will more than likely result in dark, noisy images. The best advice I can give if you are currently looking into buying a new camera is to go for the body only and invest the additional money in finding a few



Pondering which prime lens to use

cost effective low aperture lenses. I personally shoot Canon, but often use old manual Nikon glass with an adapter purchased from places like eBay. I never shoot auto in any situation, so these old lenses are great to have and certainly pack far more punch than a traditional kit lens. There are some great low light pancake lenses on the market for micro 4/3 users, which are not only sharp but lightweight too.

I always manually focus, and if you are planning on shooting in low light then I suggest you do too. Auto focusing your camera in low light is like trying to get a wild tiger to stay still so you can give it a hug...not impossible, but not easy either! If you are shooting a documentary or an event video, then manual focusing can be very difficult and is really an art form all of its own. Practice makes perfect



All together now 'ISO, shutter speed and aperture'



though, and you will get much better shots if you put in the time to teaching yourself to focus pull quickly.

Choose the right camera

Which camera is right for you then if your goal is to shoot in low light? Well, that's almost like asking how long is a piece of string. The term low light covers a vast array of situations that you could find yourself in and there are different horses for different courses, so to speak. Large sensor cameras, with interchangeable lenses, have really become the accepted standard for low light filming in my opinion and, as a rule of thumb,



the larger the sensor, the more light sensitive it will be. It's for this reason that I tend to shoot with DSLRs in low light, especially full frame, low light monsters such as the Canon 5D MKIII and 1DX/C.

These are expensive camera bodies though and won't suit everyone's budget, but if your cash flow extends to them they are certainly great additions to any low light kitbag. This is not to say that some of the lower end cameras don't pack a punch. The Nikon D5200 is superb in low light and boasts an articulated screen to boot. Although the bit rate of the recordings isn't as high as the All-I modes within the upper tier Canon's, the images are great for event filming or content heading to the Internet.



For those of you with a soft spot for Micro 4/3 cameras (of which I count myself) then the Panasonic GH3 is an impressive little beast and can be coupled with great, cheap low light pancake lenses such as the 20mm F1.7. It too has an articulated screen and it is also weather sealed in case you find yourself filming a street scene in the rain. When looking for a DSLR to film in low light with, the first thing you should take into account is the megapixels that the sensor shoots at. Typically, the higher the megapixel count of a sensor, the poorer the low light performance will be at higher ISO's. Anything between 16 and 24 megapixels tends to be within the acceptable range for cleaner images at higher ISO's.

Money to spend

For those of you with a more sizeable bank balance, or for anyone who is bothered by the ergonomics of DSLRs, the C-line from



Canon has an impressive trio of cameras capable of detailed, film-like images in some pretty harsh lighting conditions. Ultimately though, it is a combination of lens and body that will give you the best low light results. My Canon 5D MKIII with a Nikon 50mm F1.2 lens on it can crank out some amazing detail, even at ISO 12800.

This may be stating the obvious, but it is surprising how often I see it not being done. There is nothing wrong with adding your own



light source. This is common practice on a music video or film production and is certainly a lot trickier if it is just you at an event or filming in the middle of midnight protest. But, investing in a good, variable top light will improve your light shots ten fold, because they won't be so low light any more. If you're going to use a top light then I advise off-camera directional

lighting, so that your image doesn't feel flat and lifeless. Adding some additional light though will ultimately allow you to highlight important details such as a person or a particular object. The hardest part of filming in low light is giving the viewer a sense of where they should be focusing their attention, so this will help you set your subject apart from the dark background.

“IT'S ALL A MATTER OF ESTABLISHING WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU AND EXCITES YOU AS A FILMMAKER”



Bokeh effect in a low light environment



Low light can still reward you with striking images

Right or wrong

As with all things film related, there is no right or wrong way of doing anything. We are all aspiring artists trying to establish our own look and that is no different in low light. Finding the right camera/lenses for you is all part of the challenge, but once you do you will find the world can look a lot different with the lights off. Some of my favourite pieces are shot with nothing more than a street light on a dark road. I for one love the contrast of filming in black and white in minimal lighting, as it gives your work a touch of noir that I'm just automatically drawn to. I have fellow colleagues though, who are fascinated with colour and bokeh



in low light environments. It's all a matter of establishing what works for you and excites you most as a filmmaker.

With the huge leaps that have been made in technology in the last few years, and the ever increasing rate in which new firmware updates and hacks reach us, I suspect in three years time we will be snivelling at the lowly ISO 12800 and be comfortably filming above and beyond that with clean results. As ever though, I believe these are exciting times to be a budding filmmaker and I'm looking forward to seeing what the next generation of sensors will allow us to shoot, even in the harshest of lighting conditions. ■



DIGITAL FILMMAKING GOES 3D

Andrew Murchie takes us on a tour of the pros and cons of filmmaking in 3D and considers the options for doing it all on a shoestring budget

An area not often discussed as part of the current digital filmmaking revolution has been the ability for filmmakers on minimal budgets to get involved in stereoscopic 3D productions. Prior to the latest generation of stereoscopic technology, filming in 3D was out of reach for all but the most ardent enthusiasts of the medium. Juggling cumbersome, often temperamental equipment and challenging arcane techniques required 3D filmmakers to understand obscure capture and display formats, which often delivered less than impressive results. Simple errors could easily

ruin a shot, and misalignment at the capture or projection stage could induce headaches or nausea in an unsuspecting audience.

Things have changed quite dramatically though since James Cameron reinvigorated stereoscopic cinema with *Avatar* and now, with the likes of Ang Lee, Martin Scorsese, Sam Raimi and Baz Luhrman all creating astounding cinematic experiences employing the added creative options that 3D offers; it can hardly be argued any longer that 3D is simply a gimmick used by lower grade filmmakers or desperate marketeers.

So is it realistically possible for a modern digital filmmaker to shoot, edit and screen in 3D on a minimal budget? Absolutely! It's perfectly possible to create a 3D film as long as the limitations introduced by using prosumer gear are acceptable and worked within. As with any film though, getting a great script telling an engaging story is paramount. The trap of thinking that 3D will save a second-rate film is far from true, as Disney's



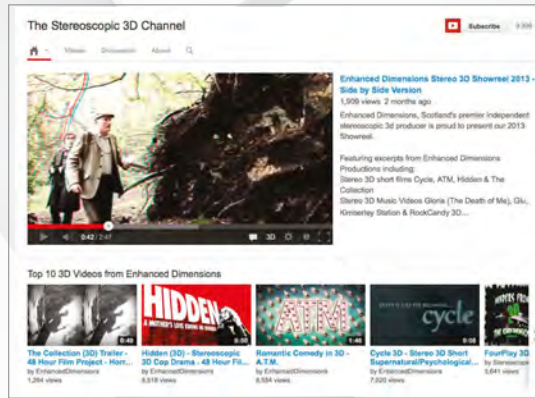
\$175 million Mars Needs Moms mega-flop proved only too well.

Assuming then that you can shoot in 3D - why would you want to? Apart from the obvious benefit of having an additional 'string to your bow' and a 'string' that is currently quite unique at that, the potential to use 3D to creatively enhance your production is wide-reaching. Sam Raimi in Oz: The Great and Powerful starts the films in 4x3, black & white with a subtle 3D effect, then blows the screen apart with the huge vista in glowing vibrant colours and vast 3D depth, bringing the surreal world of Oz to life. Ang Lee in Life of Pi created a 3D ocean with such depth and reach that we were sucked into the lifeboat right next to Richard Parker. 3D is not just about poking things in the audience's face, although My Bloody Valentine didn't do too badly from just that; 3D gives depth, it gives volume and, used effectively, pulls your audience deeper into the world inside your storyline.



Shooting in 3D

The first technical thing to understand is how stereoscopic imaging works, and it's pretty straightforward: we record two images side by side, one for the left eye and one for the



right. On replay, we use some form of barrier to present the appropriate image to each eye. Our brain then fuses these individual images to create a three-dimensional representation of the recorded scene. Creating a 3D image is relatively simple, but mastering the control of it is where the challenge comes in.

For any 3D system to work successfully the images for both capture and projection must be perfectly in sync and require perfect alignment. This sounds simple in theory, but in practice this is exceedingly complex, with microsecond variances in video streams and mismatched pairs of zoom lenses



The Stereoscopic 3D Channel on YouTube

Top 5 3D Short Films

- The Collection (3D)
- Cycle (3D)
- ATM (3D)
- Hidden (3D)
- FourPlay (3D)

Visit http://www.enhanced-dimensions.com/wordpress/?page_id=5434 for direct links to the films listed here and a whole host of stereo 3D resources.

destroying the 3D effect in scenarios where stereographers may have the equivalent of just a few pixels to play with.

There are a huge variety of options for the capture system too, ranging from all-in-one camcorders, to dual camera side-by-side and beamsplitter (mirror) rigs. Although side-by-side and beamsplitter rigs offer the most control and flexibility for the scope of this article, we are going to focus on the all-in-one 3D cameras on the market from the likes of Panasonic, Sony and JVC. The limitations with these cameras are primarily that the distance between the lenses is fixed and, as with any typical video camera, they do not offer interchangeable lenses.

There are two primary controls used to adjust the 3D effect: interaxial and convergence. The interaxial (IA) setting is the distance between the lenses and is used to



Shooting in 3D requires careful planning



The 3D effect minus those silly glasses

control the amount of 3D in a scene. Think of this as a 3D volume control: the wider apart the lenses are, the stronger the 3D effect. (This is sometimes incorrectly referred to as the interocular setting - interocular is the distance between your eyes). The interaxial is set based on a variety of factors, and in fact the number of factors is so great and variable that there are a number of free or paid for Interaxial Calculators that will figure out your optimal



IA considering the full range of variables. As we're focusing on fixed IA camcorders for this article though, we needn't dwell on the depths of IA Calculations too much at this point.

Secondly is the convergence, or adjusting convergence controls where the 3D depth sits in Z space. Adjusting this results in the entire scene appearing to move further into or out of the screen. Convergence can be controlled in two ways: whilst shooting, by adjusting the cameras to be angled slightly inwards. Or, by using parallel cameras and a Horizontal Image Translation (HIT) in post-production. Converging cameras is a hotly debated topic in stereoscopic circles as angling the cameras does lead to keystone warping issues between the left and right image. Meanwhile, using perfectly parallel cameras and adjusting using a HIT is seen as a more appropriate option wherever possible. The all-in-one camcorders are perfect in this respect and generally offer a convergence control that adjusts the image using a HIT within the camera itself.

With all-in-one cameras in mind, shooting for 3D is relatively straightforward and there are a variety of models worth considering. At the prosumer level, the likes of the Panasonic HDC Z-10000 offers great value with manual control over all aspects of the camera, 24p shooting and a 10x optical zoom; an ideal contender for dipping your toe into the

ENGAGING STORY IS PARAMOUNT...THINKING THAT 3D WILL SAVE A SECOND-RATE FILM IS FAR FROM TRUE





3D kit can be surprisingly affordable



interdimensional waters. The Sony HXR-3D1 is another contender with similar specifications, although with less manual control in 3D mode. At the professional-end of the market, the Panasonic AG-3DP1 is a high-end shoulder-mounted camera used in broadcast that would typically be called upon as B cameras on live sports events where the fixed IA limitation is acceptable for the speed of set-up and general portability.

Avoiding the 3D pitfalls

Although all-in-one, fixed IA cameras make filming in 3D relatively straightforward, there are still some 3D-specific pitfalls to steer clear of. Fixed IA cameras have an optimal shooting distance, generally somewhere between 1 metre and 4 metres. Anything closer will create too strong a 3D effect that we will struggle to fuse into a cohesive image and anything much



further away will become quite flat. Shooting within these distances will deliver optimal 3D results. And that's worth remembering.

Windows violations are the most likely problems that an inexperienced 3D filmmaker using an all-in-one stereoscopic camera will experience. Windows violations happen when one view has part of an object showing, while the other eye doesn't. In reality, our eyes cope with this as we have a natural fall off in our field of view. We don't really have the effect of an object being literally cut-off in one of our views. If the object is moving and this effect is for a frame or two, then it's unlikely to be a problem. But where this is static, it will become obvious and generate a little discomfort for the viewer. The simplest solution is to be aware of these factors and to adjust your framing so as to remove the offending object.

When converging shots, be wary of having

objects floating randomly in space, just as in 2D where you wouldn't typically cut off a person at their knees. In 3D, if you frame up a person cropped at the waist, but converge them so they appear to be in front of the screen, you have a rather disconcerting shot of a cropped-off torso floating in front of the screen. In this instance, the convergence should be set to move the person just behind the screen plane. This will give a natural look, as if you are looking through a window into the story world.

Depth-of-field is another hotly debated issue amongst stereographers. Shallow depth-of-field, which is used in 2D to help to direct the users view, is considered by some as inappropriate in 3D - the viewer should ideally have the ability to adjust their focus as they



Facts and figures

Despite regular reports heralding the death of 3D, the statistics simply don't back-up the argument. Year-on-year, 3D has continued to grow, or hold its share in a depressed market.

- In both 2011 and 2012 five of the ten top grossing films were screened in 3D
- Seven of the top ten grossing films of all time were screened or re-released in a 3D edition
- Global sales of 3D TV's increased by 72 per cent during 2012
- Prometheus Blu-ray generated 25% of unit sales from the 3D version





Active vs Passive vs Autostereoscopic

3D TV's currently deliver the 3D image using a variety of technologies:

- Active 3D TV uses powered shutter glasses that open and close in synchronization with the flashing alternate left/right TV image. Still quite common but growing less so, active glasses in theory deliver the best quality image, but can be more bulky and no common standard for these glasses exists.
- Passive 3D TV uses a polarising filter over the screen with matching polarising glasses to view the image. This is the same as the cinema experience and allows for inexpensive glasses and ease of use. Image quality is, in theory, reduced as each view seen though the polariser only delivers half the screen resolution.
- Autostereoscopic 3D TV delivers glasses-free 3D using a lenticular-like prism array in front of the screen. Although this exists and works to a certain extent, this is the 3D technology we expect to see much more of in the future.



The Collection film crew

would while looking around their environment in reality. This is especially the case in out-of-focus foreground objects, where it is disorientating to attempt to fix your focus on a pre-blurred object. High contrast areas should also be avoided - these tend to exacerbate any ghosting issues that might occur when one image cross-talks into the other. Do consider other depth cues when trying to maximise the 3D effect. A row of street lights shrinking into the distance is further enhanced by being in 3D. Similarly, shots with some outer framing, like a window or doorway, add obvious layers of depth and can be extremely effective in boosting the overall effect.

Showing your work in 3D

It's unlikely that you'll have easy access to a

3D cinema and 3D DCP creation experience. But, never fear, playing back your 3D masterpiece has never been easier. A widely used standard for exporting a stereo 3D video is in a 1080p container, with the left and right images squished horizontally by 50% and placed side-by-side (left on the left). Most modern 3D enabled TV's will have the option to playback this standard side-by-side stereoscopic video and will play it back in all its glory. So it's pretty straightforward.

Alternatively, using the same side-by-side format, you can upload to YouTube and enable the fantastic 3D playback engine on this site. This built-in 3D controller will allow users with any one of a wide variety of 3D viewing technologies to select and playback





Get two movies for the price of one

Shooting in 3D gives you a perfectly usable two-dimensional film too. You simply use only one of the views. It's essentially TWO-D for the price of ONE!



Shooting 3D film The Collection

your three-dimensional production in the most appropriate format for their system. If all they have access to is basic red/cyan glasses they can select that. However, if they have higher-end displays or a proper 3D television, they can select the most appropriate viewing method and the YouTube player will convert it for them



Editing 3D footage within Adobe After Effects

on-the-fly. In a worst case scenario, it's very likely that your chosen editing package will almost certainly allow you to export footage as a red/cyan anaglyph. In that case, simply keep compression to a minimum and stick to 1080p and you'll have a 3D film that can playback almost anywhere.

What it all means

Shooting with all-in-one 3D cameras can deliver amazing results with little of the complexity of high-end equipment and can offer a real taste of the opportunities that working three-dimensionally can deliver. Delving into the absolute depths of stereoscopy though, is a longer and more challenging journey. But, once you've experienced the extra dimension of creativity, it's difficult to comprehend why you'd shoot anything else. If you'd like to delve further into 3D or would simply like to see some examples of shorts filmed using a fixed IA 3D camera then visit www.enhanced-dimensions.com, where there are plenty more resources for the indie digital 3D filmmaker.

Andrew Murchie is an award-winning stereographer, 3D filmmaker and motion graphics professional. He works on digital, video and motion graphics projects for London and Edinburgh-based marketing agency, Multiply, where he is a company director. ■

YOU ONLY HAVE TO ASK



Student filmmaker Ryushi Lindsay reckons that anyone can produce their own movie on a miniscule budget just as long as you're not afraid to take a few chances



I recently screened my new short, *August Weekend*, in front of a small audience and was struck, when introducing the film, by how remarkable it was that we shot the production for so little money. I don't have the exact budget, but I can comfortably say that we shot the entire film, which runs at about 11 minutes, for little more £60. All we had to pay for was food; everything else was a string of favours. And therein lies the key.

Project lowdown

Here's a little background to the project: it tells the story of a girl, Alice, who stays with her older brother for a weekend because her parents have gone on holiday. It's rather subversive in places and I drew quite a bit on

some of the stuff I learned studying English Literature A-Level. I had the basic concept for the screenplay for a while, but it wasn't until I saw Meli Pinkerton in a school play that I wrote it, confident I had found a young actor capable of portraying the appropriate emotional tension. I approached her about the lead role and after some (not insignificant) adjustments to get her mother's approval, we were green-lit and ready to go.

We coordinated use of the primary location with the owners (a school acquaintance's parents) being away on holiday. This was perfect, as we had the entire property to ourselves for five days, meaning we didn't have to worry about wrapping or getting in each morning at any certain time to coincide with their lives. We also paid nothing for the location of the exterior café scene; I simply emailed Maggie, who owns and runs Java & Jazz, explaining that I was a local 17-year-old filmmaker, and she was incredibly accommodating, allowing us an entire morning's shooting.

Something borrowed

In terms of kit, I limited myself because of budget restrictions to what I owned or could borrow from friends and family. I'll quickly mention here that I shot on a DSLR with a 50mm f/1.4 and 20mm f/2.8, but there's a more detailed kit list over on the right. I try

BEHIND THE LENS

Ryushi Lindsay is an 18-year-old filmmaker from West Sussex, who is currently finishing up A-Levels. He recently completed a new short film and has a place on the Film Production BA at the Arts University in Bournemouth from 2014 (he's taking a gap year). He plans to work and make films over the next year and is always thinking about his next project. Ryushi has recently landed a music video gig and also has plans for a film series, more along the lines of a 'body' of shorts, which he is hoping to shoot this autumn.

to resist the appeal of shiny toys, keeping things simple and prioritising the story. There is one master shot where I wish I'd had a slider though - I ended up using a pan, but it would've been significantly more effective with that lateral movement. I opted to shoot a lot of the film stopped down; I couldn't find a good enough reason to shoot with that shallow depth-of-field, which seems to have become synonymous with DSLR filmmaking. For me, there's something too delicate about that shallow depth-of-field, which didn't match the tone I was going for.

Obviously, I'd love to have paid my actors but we simply didn't have the budget. I think it's really important to develop strong working relationships with talent so they're enthusiastic to work for free. I'd worked with both Charlie Raffan (who plays Marty) and Callum Mackenzie (Sam) on two previous projects and both were genuinely excited to work with me again. Gala Wesson (Chloe) had just come off acting in Joe Wright's *Anna Karenina* a few months previously, so proved to be a really solid base for our production. It also helped that I know these three really well; they're friends of mine, so we already had a rapport and could build a good atmosphere for Meli, who didn't know any of us.



Minimal overheads

All our crew also worked for free. I DP'd and operated the camera myself to save time; we had a very tight schedule. However, I'd done a lot of planning for each day of shooting, saving us masses of time - this meant we wrapped at least an hour early each day, if not more. I got my brother to act as sound recordist/boom op because he records a lot of music; I recommend musicians if you can't find a location sound specialist because they're so in tune with their ears and are very conscious of audio levels. I met our co-producer, Izzy, when I overheard her at school saying she wanted to work as a producer. It was great having her around. I think taking her to meetings with me was very beneficial as there's an unfortunate stigma attached to teenage boys in this country. She was brilliant on-set as well, keeping everything running smoothly.

Screening the film locally only cost us £10. I know Brad Scott, who runs the local film society (<http://forestrowfilmsociety.org/>) and he



was incredibly cool about letting us use their facilities to screen it. All I had to do was hire the village hall where the projector and screen are. He's also trying to find a slot before one of the main features next season, so our film gets another chance to be seen by an audience. There's definitely a different vibe between watching online and your film being projected for gathered viewers. Local film societies are great because they have both the facilities and the audiences for you to screen your shorts.

Ask a favour

I think the basic message of this feature is to get to know as many people as you possibly can. You'll hopefully then have a huge range of individuals to ask favours of. People are particularly friendly towards students and are genuinely pleased to help. I remember hearing a story about a filmmaker who shot for nothing inside a top London hotel, simply because they took the plunge and asked. Don't be afraid of asking people for free stuff. After all, what have you got to lose? Communities love helping local arts endeavours and it's a reciprocal relationship; local businesses get a bit of free publicity in return for letting you shoot on their property. To conclude, there really is nothing stopping you from going out and shooting your short; all you have to do is ask. ■

CAMERA AND RECORDING MEDIA

- Nikon D7000 (I actually come from a stills background and hadn't expected to end up as a filmmaker when purchasing the camera 3 years ago, which is why I retained my allegiance to Nikon. I now realise Canon would've been a better decision, because the Nikon half-bitrate footage is a nightmare to grade.)
- 16GB SanDisk Extreme Class 10 45MB/s SDHC Cards x 2

LENSES AND FILTERS

- Nikkor 50mm f/1.4 AI (These old manual focus lenses are brilliant for filmmaking)
- Nikkor 20mm f/2.8 AF-D
- Light Craft Workshop Fader ND

AUDIO

- Zoom H4n
- Rode NTG-2
- DIY Boom Pole (Tutorial from Indiemogul: <http://youtu.be/OSAfRZIsM7w>)

LIGHTING & GRIP

- Arrilite 1000 (1K Tungsten Light)
- Davis & Sanford Provista FM18 Head with Provista 7518 sticks
- DIY PVC Shoulder Rig (Built following instructions from <http://compactvideo.blogspot.co.uk/2010/10/5-quick-and-easy-shoulder-rig.html>)

POST

- Edited in Premiere Pro Creative Suite 5.5
- VFX in After Effects Creative Suite 5 with the Trapcode Particular plug-in
- Colour Graded with Magic Bullet Looks 2.0

A link to the film: <http://youtu.be/JpQJv3-IA-U>

SACHA BENNETT

DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

Sacha Bennett is an actor, writer, producer, director and accomplished filmmaker who has managed to combine all of his skills to great effect

You're an actor, writer, producer and director. What came first?

It all began in an Odeon cinema in my hometown of Harpenden, aged 7 or 8 watching Jaws and the head pops out of the boat. Myself and around 400 other people jumped. I thought that was an amazing thing to happen, that an image made so many people share an identical emotion. At that point I said to myself 'I wanna do that!'.

It took me a while to realise what a film director was but, aged 12, I watched Blade Runner and started asking questions like: 'Who came up with this world?', 'Who said I want Flying Cars, pyramids with flames!' and 'What the hell is Sushi?'. Then I gorged on movies as they were suddenly so accessible



Get Lucky





Outside Bet

on VHS. I watched *The Shining* every other day for a year, and *Goodfellas* on a weekly basis for about 5 years. My entry into the film industry was at a basic grass roots level. After all, it's pretty rare for a 17-year-old to land a movie to direct!

I just knew I had to be in it to stand a chance and, as it happened, being on the 'shop floor' in various production jobs was the best film school ever. I was an extra,



Devilwood

“AFTER DEVILWOOD, INVESTORS CAME BACK WITH £150K AND ASKED IF WE COULD MAKE A FEATURE”

runner, props guy, stand-in and game-show tester. I also doubled for the likes of Andrew Lincoln, and then I started getting proper roles in productions whilst simultaneously working as an Assistant Director. All of it was invaluable experience: on the larger productions you can see where the money and time is wasted, on the smaller ones you can see how to ingeniously cut corners without damaging the final product.

It was this that made me realise you have to do everything yourself - any first-time film director will tell you they pretty much produced it as well, even if they didn't get the credit. It's such a collaborative business once you've got things going. But at the start, it's just you saying 'I can do this!' and everyone else looking at you saying 'Prove it.'

If you can type, then you have to start writing yourself. It's rare to find a talented writer who will keep authoring scripts for you when you have no money. The writer is the least regarded



person in the process, which is insane considering nobody would have a job in the industry without a script. As the saying goes, writing is rewriting and, like any discipline, the more you do, the better you get, hopefully...! So, I started writing when I was 14 and worked on ridiculous stuff, normally centering around my hobbies of *Dungeons & Dragons* and a preoccupation with World War 2 stories because of *Commando!* Magazine. I was also watching endless repeats of *The Great Escape* and spent time exploring the woodland at the end of my garden, which fired my imagination for 'men on a mission'.

Eventually I worked my way into a position of shooting promos, visuals and low-budget comedy material for a local cable station in Cambridge, and then my break was convincing three amazing and philanthropic friends to put some money into my short film *Devilwood*. I'd written a short, snappy script that was unlike any short film out there (I set it 300 years ago, had a bad guy as the hero, a shape-shifting demon and an authentic tavern). The incredibly talented John Simm had agreed to star in



Sacha Bennett and Tamer Hassan

my 3-day shoot epic, mainly because he'd always wanted to play a Highwayman since watching Dick Turpin on TV as a kid (pretty much the same reason I wrote Devilwood and that character, so that was a nice harmony). The short went on to win some international awards and was optioned to become a TV series - an amazing reaction, and one that rarely happens to shorts. So I thanked the heavens for it. Because of this success, those three lovely investors came back and brought some other like-minded individuals along for our first feature together, which was Tu£sday.

Did you make a conscious decision to try these different disciplines or has your career path just unfolded that way?

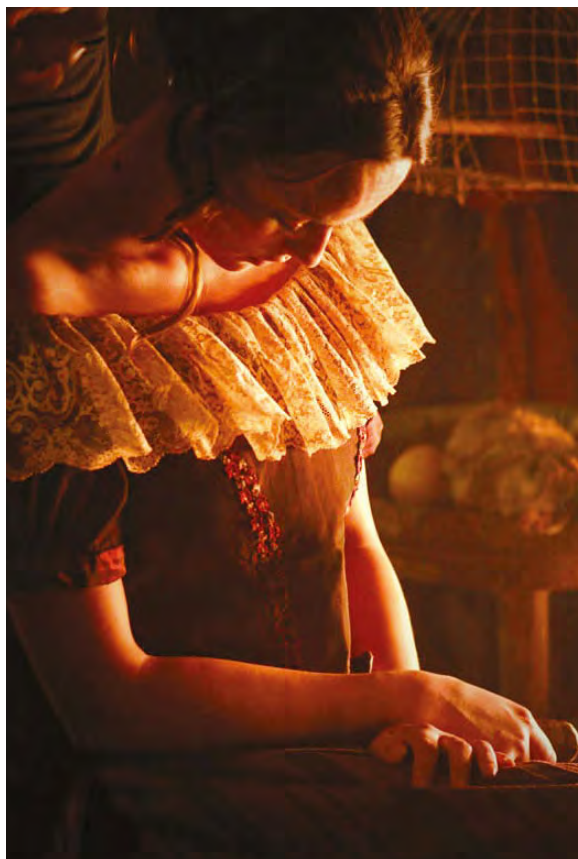
You have to do as much as you can to get where you want to be. I wrote because I didn't know anyone else that could. I produced, because I didn't have any money to pay anyone. I directed because, well, it was my childhood dream to do it.

Tell us about the main differences between the different skills...is acting a world away from the writing?

Being in front of the camera has been an incredible experience to bring to directing. Anyone who wants to direct should act first. You realise what it's like and what the actor wants to hear when you say 'Go again!'. So many directors don't talk to their actors, don't involve them, don't even explain why they're doing another take - and it pisses actors off. And so they're left with no notion of what they're supposed to be doing, or for that matter, what you (as the director) is trying to achieve.

It's not rocket science - you need to talk, explain and nurture performance. If the actor feels comfortable, then you're already in a good position to not have to do endless takes. As with any job, if you want to oversee that, then you should try it yourself first. Writing is a solo experience (unless you're in a writing team of course), so there's nobody there to scrunch their face and go 'Really?', so that has its pros and cons. For me, it always takes a while to start up, but once I'm going, I don't want to stop.

Directing, for me, is the best job in the world. It's not even a job, because if you're not enjoying it, then you really shouldn't be a film director. You are faced with 100 questions an hour, and all of them need instant answers, and if you can't handle that then it will be a very stressful place to be. But, if you know your material, have already seen the film you're shooting in your head, then you already have the answers, and it's



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF BOTH PRODUCING AND DIRECTING FILMS?

The biggest benefit in having done both is that you know how to play both sides and make it work best for the final film. A producer is consistently worrying about costs spiralling and knows the long game involved - the budget isn't just about what happens during the shoot...A director normally wants the film to be as 'big' as possible and will not necessarily understand where all the money is going if he can't have that aerial shot over the pyramids that would set the scene just as he saw it in his or her head. When I read (or write a script), I'm now pretty instinctive about what will cost too much, what is offering little in the way of production value, what will be a nightmare to shoot - all this before we've even started shooting the film and watching the budget/schedule spiral out of control. So in that respect it's been vastly beneficial to have produced and directed: I've saved a lot of heartache and 'deleted' scenes. If you're actually producing or directing something, then there are no real drawbacks as such - you're doing what you set out to do at the end of the day! Producing is a constant headache in terms of logistics and phone calls, there's always something that needs sorting out. It can be quite stressful because you enter this bubble when you're filming, and nothing in the 'real world' can touch you, mainly because it's all about making the shoot happen.



Bob Hoskins in Outside Bet



On the set of Devilwood

immensely gratifying working with anything from 75 right up to 300 people who all pull together to achieve your vision.

Can you tell us about the film projects that followed?

After Devilwood, the investors came back with £150,000 and asked if we could make a feature. So I rewrote a script I'd done - a bank job thriller - where three groups of people rob the same bank on the same day - and structured it like Rashomon, with flash-backs and flash-forwards to the same event, but from different characters' perspectives. This



really helped keep the budget and schedule down, and we shot TuEsday in 16 days, with a terrific cast (John Simm returned, along with Philip Glenister, Ashley Walters, Kevin McNally, Kate Magowan, Linal Haft, Alex McQueen and Cristian Solimeno, amongst others). I'd work with all of them again in a heartbeat. We shot on the Sony 900R and my regular DoP, Nic Lawson, gave it a cool, steely look, using depth-of-field to give the raw digital look a more cinematic feel. I've always chosen 2.35 aspect to help give the digital media a more cinematic quality. The film sold really well around the world, from Australia to Canada, and was in the Top 20 VoD end of year sales

after its cinema/DVD run.

The following year I shot Bonded By Blood. I wanted to make the film as 'big' as possible, so rewrote the original script to give it more of an epic feel (too many scenes were set in kitchens, pubs and cars). So I opened it out, essentially by dropping unnecessary scenes, plus I saved some budget so we could shoot exteriors such as Southend Pier and actually shoot in Amsterdam too (which originally was going to be cheated in Hemel Hempstead!).

The cast had some big personalities when we were filming, such as Tamer Hassan, who was wonderful to work with - he brings so much life and electricity to a scene on-set. It was my first film with Adam Deacon, who's a natural born star, and we're now planning our third feature together. Neil Maskell was another in the extensive cast, and he's such a gifted actor, with burning talent. I keep writing roles for him in the hope that we can team up again. We shot on RED with Ali Asad as the DoP, and embraced a palette of dark shadows and garish colours to give the film a hellish feel in places, conflicting with starkness in the exterior snow scenes. We watched a few underground Korean films as inspiration, and obviously the classic gangster films such as Goodfellas and Scarface.

I wanted to balance the manic and chaotic nature of the three main villains with a calmness from the 'less bad' guys - the film constantly shifts between evil and humour, chaos and stillness. I sold this not just through shooting style (gliding steadicam/wide locked-off shots/erratic hand-held) but also with costume (the bad guys tend to wear black, the 'less bad' guys wear white or pale colours), and also in the edit: there was a stillness to Vincent Regan's scenes, whereas Tamer's scenes felt like you'd drunk the bar out, and were edgy.

After the darkness of this film, and the nasty characters, I wanted to do the complete opposite - so Outside Bet is a lovely film, with warm, loveable rogues. Nic Lawson came back for me, and we shot on Alexa, which was a wonderful experience. We bathed the film in a honey-glow, and Hayley Nebauer (my regular costume designer) came up with some amazing costumes that felt period (like TuEsday, the film is set in the 80's), but each character had their own unique look. The film turned out to be Bob Hoskins last leading role, which I have mixed feelings about - it was an honour and privilege to work with someone whose career has charted such landmark films, and it made me feel good when he hugged me each night on wrap and said 'Well done on

“OUTSIDE BET TURNED OUT TO BE BOB HOSKINS LAST LEADING ROLE, WHICH I HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT”



On the set of Outside Bet

today'. But Bob was just one of an amazing cast, a group of such diverse talented actors, that it's hard for me to imagine ever assembling that amount of talent in one film again: Jenny Agutter, Rita Tushingham, Phil Davis, Calum McNab, Adam Deacon, Dudley Sutton, Emily Atack...the list goes on. The upside of such a wonderful cast was what they brought to the film, and the energy they created for each other - the downside - so many scenes had more than 7 speaking roles, and it was hard to get everyone in the same place so they'd hear my direction!

We had real race horses on set too, not film trained ones, which tend to be more muscular and stocky. These thoroughbreds only race every so often, so asking them to do more

than a couple of takes became an interesting situation between owners and production, but we got there in the end. The biggest problem we had was that no racecourse would let us film racing on there, because it's turf-based in the UK. So once you've done a few takes, the



Adam Deacon, Jason Maza and Bob Hoskins



ground is all chewed up - I was quite envious of American horse films (like Seabiscuit) at that point, as they race on clay, and sweep up after the race. So they can do as many takes and have as many action vehicles (camera cars) as they want - but it was important to me that we shot actual horses racing, as the original idea had been to buy in stock footage, which I fought hard against.

We did have amazing help behind the scenes with Mark Kershaw, who used to run Sandown Park, and also had amazing access to the racing community, and managed to film at Sandown and Windsor to give the film some credibility and quality. With the very talented production designer Matthew Button, we created a lot of the sets at the old Brunel University site in Runnymede. Misfits filmed there also, and it's an amazing place to wander round and go 'Ooh, could this reception area be a South London pub?' (It could - the pub interior in Outside Bet is entirely a wonderful set built by Matt and his team).

If you know 80's music, you'll also know the soundtrack is a cracker - we even had original songs from Paul Weller and Nick Heyward, along with classics from Dexys, ABC, Human League, Adam Ant - the list goes on. This was my first experience with a studio - Universal - which was a little scary to begin with, but I quickly built a great relationship with the people there, and there is nothing like having that globe and music at the beginning of a film you've done. It still manages to send shivers down my spine.

My next feature is also with Universal, Get



Calum McNab and Jenny Agutter



Lucky, which is out in cinemas on August 9th. When I joined the project, the original script was a bit jumbled - it'd been developed by a number of directors over the years, and seemed to be retaining notes from all of them, so it wasn't truly its own thing going in one direction. I instantly latched on to certain elements of the script, and realised it should be noir - and the action needed to be beefed up. I rewrote it, getting rid of unnecessary material, and honed the story into a heist/

WHAT ARE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH?

Bonded By Blood did phenomenally well in the UK, and I'm working with the original author to bring another of his books to screen - it demonstrated that the appetite for this kind of film hasn't waned, and if these kind of films sell well, then they will still get made. Considering its budget, Tuesday getting distribution around the world was a massive success. Outside Bet got a hard time from some critics who seemed to dislike Cockney characters, but others, such as the esteemed Mark Kermode, made it one of their 'gems of the year' - but it's such a timeless, warm film, I know it will be around for many years.

revenge thriller, and came up with several action set-pieces that would lift the film above most British crime films. I chanced my arm with the producers (including the gifted Adam Bohling and David Reid of Layer Cake/Kickass fame) and pitched 'big' ideas like a boat chase along the Thames and a car chase down the Blackwall Tunnel. And, with the expertise of them, along with a wonderfully dedicated crew, managed to achieve all of it.

I shot with DoP Peter Wignall (on the Alexa again) and we stole from the noir canon, so lots of harsh whites, dark backgrounds, silhouettes and character shadows. Although this was my first 'contemporary' movie, I pushed all the design teams into embracing the past, so fedoras, fur coats, femme fatales, Tommy guns, it's all there. The film is very slick, glossy and stylised - I really wanted it to stand out, and the co-producers (Hollywood heavy-weights Atlas) loved how 'American' it felt, whilst still being British (Tower Bridge and The Shard play as the landscape against the casino heist).

I reunited with some cast - the young



Craig Fairbrass in Get Lucky



The Outside Bet all-star line-up

and talented Emily Atack/Jason Maza - and had the good fortune to work with the likes of Craig Fairbrass (Rise of the Footsoldier), James Cosmo (Game of Thrones), recent Olivier Award-winning Luke Treadaway and Marek Oravec (Captain America), who I've been desperate to cast in something for a long time. Everyone steps up to the plate, and it's very young and sexy. We also had the brilliant James O'Donnell (Skyfall) as stunt co-ordinator, and he brought so much to the

film it was unreal. There's a car stunt in the film that has never, ever been done before on film, so we're kinda proud on that one! (By the most amazing driver you've ever met, Rob Hunt). The noir vibe came about purely from my take of the material, but suddenly there seemed to be a few movies coming out that have enjoyed similar inspiration (Drive, Welcome to the Punch), so hopefully we've caught a wave of zeitgeist with it. But, essentially, Get Lucky is one of those crowd-pleasers with lots of

action, humour and thrills. The DoP shot a lot of the Bourne action sequences, and there's a knife/fight in this that stands up to anything Hollywood can do, so the audience will get their money's worth.

Your wife is also in the business - is that a good or bad thing?

She's not just my wife, but my best friend, muse and most realistic critic. She'll put me on the path to what I should be doing, and settle my fears. She's had a little cameo in everything





I've done - normally with a bad guy aiming a gun at her, so she's also become my good luck totem on set also. You ask if there's anything bad about her being in the business... You know she's going to read this, right? Of course there's nothing bad!

Can you give us an insight into your preferred filmmaking scenario - favourite kit, locations, crew and actors?

I've had the good fortune of working with some amazing cast and crews. It's always a shame you can't take everyone on to the next job, but I'm hoping to keep



can go wrong, there are so many factors: people and/or circumstances that can bury the whole project. I'm not saying filmmakers are on a par with amazing professions like nurses and doctors, but you do sometimes wonder how such a large group of people can turn up at the designated time (normally 6am) in a random part of the world (normally the last place you'd want to be at 6am), and work for 12 hours or more... Only to come back for the next 5 days and have one day off (which you normally spend planning the following week's work).

All that said, 'Film Director' is the best job in the world - if that's what you want to do with your life of course(!) - the 'La Famiglia' bonding of a cast and crew while you're shooting is such a wonderful, unique, giving, fantastic experience, I wouldn't want to ever go without it again. Right now, my preferred camera is the Alexa: it's never given me any problems on set, and I love the results that Nic/Peter have delivered for me on them. Arri put so much thought and attention into it before releasing the camera, it's paid off.

I'm interested in seeing how RED have improved their cameras though, and Ali has praised the latest model. That's the best thing - it's great to have all these decent choices at your fingertips right now, and hopefully the leaps in technology will continue to benefit the filmmaker as time goes on. But, all that said, I still want to shoot something on 35mm before it disappears, just so I know I did it, and have something to show my grandkids when they have no perception that long rolls of film were used to make, well, films...!

“ GET LUCKY OPENS IN UK CINEMAS ON AUGUST 9TH - SO THAT'S THE NEXT ONE OUT OF THE GATES ”

making films and so get to work with all these people again and again on different projects. My ideal filmmaking scenario - one which hasn't happened yet - is to have an original script (by me!), a crew I've personally assembled that best suits the project, a cast that is perfect for the film and brings wide international distribution, no outside forces changing what myself and the editor want to do in the cut... the list will go on, but it can't happen. I suspect, not even Steven Spielberg can say 'I had absolutely everything the way I wanted it', because you're always at the mercy of things like the weather, star-actor availability, marketing departments getting it right, a clear window in the theatrical release when you're not up against the biggest movie of the year (as *Outside Bet* was with *The Avengers*), and so on.

Getting a film going is such a major achievement, so to see it through to the end verges on miracle-status. So many things

Emily Atack in *Get Lucky*



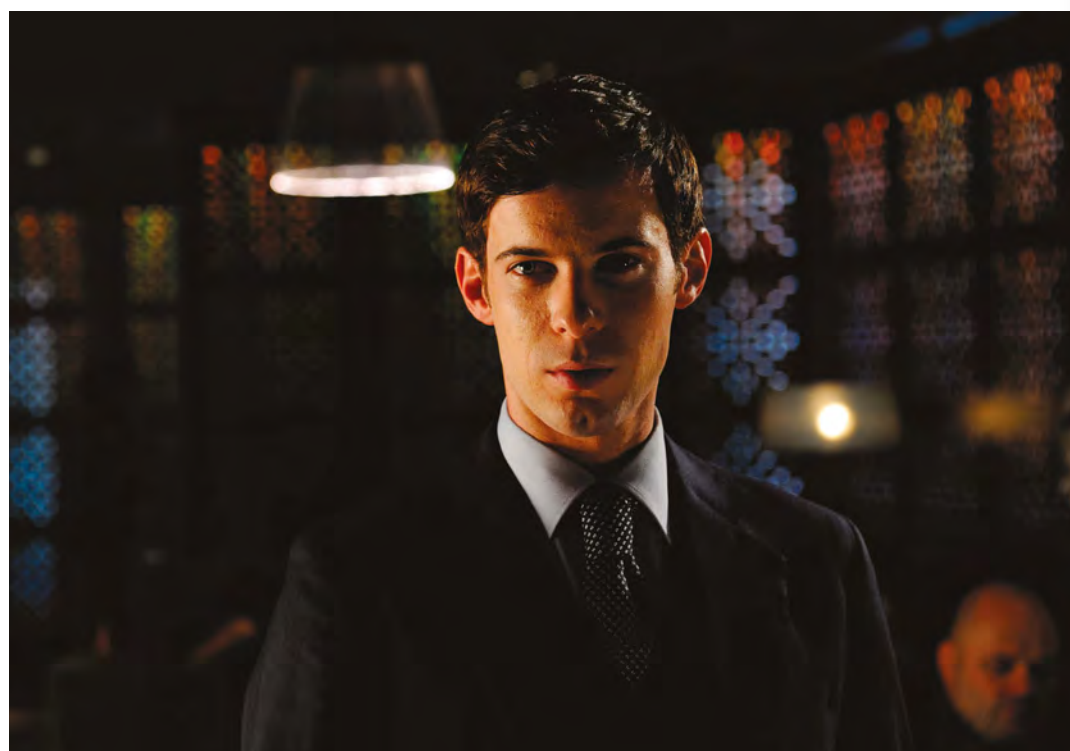
Luke Treadaway, T.J. Ramini and Marek Oravec (below) in Get Lucky



My first film, *Tuesday*, was in the shortlist for the first ever Film London Microwave funding. It started great, all of us were hand-picked into a final group of ten director/producer teams - which produced the brilliant team of Eran Creevy/Ben Pugh of *Shifty/Welcome to the Punch* fame - but my film hit a brick wall with the industry panel. One of their number stated that my script was 'like a *British Usual Suspects*'. I took this as a compliment, but very quickly it became apparent that it wasn't supposed to be a compliment, but more of an

issue. She asked me "Do you think we need a *British Usual Suspects*?"

I said it would be brilliant if we could achieve that. An eye-roll was the reaction. I prickled, and knew I was on an uphill battle. They then asked me about the proposed cast of John Simm, Ashley Walters, Philip Glenister et al - suggesting it was ridiculous that I could get the two current biggest TV stars together on-screen. Despite my assurances that I'd got the cast on-board, they declared I was 'dreaming'. Well, in the end we found the



How do you view the current filmmaking situation in the UK?

I've been very lucky to have shot 4 features in 5 years. It's a privileged position, and I've worked with some amazing talent. Conversely, I have great, talented friends who have made a feature, and not had a crack at another one because of the dire state of funding over here. It seems that there's almost a reaction against commercial ideas over here, unless they're Hollywood movies, and a lot of attention/soft money is diverted to projects that won't really find a proper audience.



Neil Maskell in Bonded By Blood

money outside of the Film London remit, but these great actors had all promised to be in it, and were in it - and if you can't make dreams a reality in this business, where does that leave you? To date, none of my films have received help from funding bodies, or Government sponsorship. That's not to say I wouldn't like it, but so far I'm not on their radar - despite having four films that have had UK theatrical releases, and widespread international sales.

And what about the bigger picture - is technology

opening many more doors for budding filmmakers?

When I started, digital was just coming through, but you had to do clever things on the set (and in the grade), just so the film didn't look too 'digital' and 'fake'. These days, cameras like the Alexa are producing terrific results, with film lenses available for them to add to the lustre. So for anyone starting out these days: If you have a story, and no money, you can shoot on your iPhone and edit on

your computer. There really is no excuse now not to just get out there and do it. For me, this new onslaught of technology is only going to make the next generation of filmmakers the best yet. They can make all their mistakes (and hopefully learn from them) without having the costs that previous generations have had to endure. Everything is so instant now, you can roll with the flow, edit as you shoot, know what coverage you need right there and then - it's an exciting time. ■

WHAT ARE YOUR LATEST PROJECTS AND WHEN CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE THE FINISHED ARTICLES?

As I've mentioned, Get Lucky opens in UK cinemas on August 9th - so that's the next one out of the gates. Then, if everything goes to plan, I'll be shooting my modern-day adaptation of Othello for Carnaby (producers of Rise of the Footsoldier) - it's set in the world of music, and there's some really exciting talent coming on-board, but I can't say too much about it at the moment (it'll probably hit cinemas sometime in 2014). I'm currently writing a Hollywood thriller for some former New Line execs, which will have a major A-list cast and shoots in Istanbul and

Venice - and we're developing another script that will shoot in the US, centering around serial killers, DNA and a pandemic disease. I've also written a near-future war movie, with a brilliant proposed cast. We're developing it with some big industry hitters, and hope to shoot in January, 2014. I took inspiration from Invasion of the Bodysnatchers and Alien, but will shoot it like the opening beach scene of Saving Private Ryan. We're really excited about it, and it's got potential to become a franchise, so there's lots of interest surrounding it. One thing I've learnt in this business, is you can't just have one project that you nurture - things can take so long, so you need 'several projects at various stages of development'. But look, if it was easy, then everyone would be making feature films!



GANGSTER TRIPPIN'



Adi Kemp is a one half of a moviemaking partnership that has recently produced a brand new comedy by the name of *Stitch'd Up*



How did your Adi & Sylvie Kemp Films business start out?

I'd always had a love for films, ever since I was a young boy, and often wondered what went into making them. But I never really pursued that any further until the late age of 47, where I started off doing background and small acting roles for local colleges and universities. Then, almost a year later, I had the honour of working as a background artist on two of the bigger sets in London, Pinewood and Talkback Thames, filming *Big Fat Gypsy Gangster*, where I played a prison officer and *Jack Falls*, where I played an Armed Response Officer, and working under a director like Paul Tanter really inspired me. After a year of being a background artist and doing some small acting roles, I decided to get together with my partner Sylvie and start a production company. In the beginning, the company was called Blue Eyed Productions, where we did a couple of films under this banner and it was only at the beginning of 2012 we decided to change the name to Adi & Sylvie Kemp Films. So that's how we are now known.

It's reassuring to hear you've had no formal training - what's the best advice for non-academically qualified filmmaking types?

The best advice I can really think of is, as long as you have the imagination to write a script, or know someone that has, then this is the first tool you need. You also need vision and sheer determination to succeed in this business, which

can be tough, but it shouldn't deter you just because you don't have training. It does help to have some kind of budget to cover such things as food and drink on set, as keeping your actors and crew happy by feeding them really helps. Nobody can work on an empty stomach. Learning new skills and doing things yourself can really save a lot on the budget though, and also being on other film sets on a voluntary basis



Kris Luckin, DoP

can teach you the basic skills too. Tapping into resources such as a Star Now basic package and Talent Circle, which are free sites to join and free to advertise - this is where you can source most of your actors, crew and sometimes locations. If the actors like the script then they are more likely to come in on a voluntary basis. This also works both ways, as actors do need those IMDB credits, so it always pays to list your films with IMDB. It is also useful to use social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Skills Pages because at least by using these you will be able to link up with people within the same field. Don't let it stop you just because you haven't had any training. If you have the vision and determination, then I really think you should just go for it.

How much did your early career moves shape the way things are right now?

After doing painting and decorating and landscape gardening for most of my working life, I felt a change was as good as a rest. And, as I said, having a love for films from such a young age and doing the background and acting roles and also my age basically inspired me to change career. I have to say, I'm really enjoy doing this even though it does come with its trials and tribulations, but once you see the results it is all worth it in the end.

What made you decide to just go for it - was there a defining moment or has it just evolved that way?

I would have to say that being on set and just generally being curious about how



Actors Tommy and Archie, crew Kris Luckin, DoP, and Jayson Jacob Johnson, co-director



everything was done made a big difference. Even sneaking a peek at the screen to watch the rushes back, which you're not really supposed to do, really interested me and made me want to learn more about being behind the camera, rather than in front of it. So it's just gone from there really.

You're based near the south coast - does location matter for a film company given that you spent time working for larger companies near the capital?

Yes, being near the south coast does have its downsides for a film company because if we were based in, or nearer, the capital we would have more access to better locations and studios and facilities. But, saying that, being in Hampshire and Dorset does offer some locations, but you've just got to know where to find them. Sourcing actors and crew in the

WHO DOES WHAT WITHIN THE COMPANY AND WHY?

Sylvie and I work together as a very close team because we both have the same vision when it comes to writing and finding the right actor. We do the producing together, the casting and also find the crew. I have also turned my hand to directing, which I really enjoy. Sylvie also likes to act and has appeared in a couple of the productions we've produced and others we have written. She has turned her hand to learning and doing the SFX and standard make-up on set, which she thoroughly enjoys as she's very artistic and loves learning new skills.

Kris Luckin DoP, Jordan Gerrett, sound and Jayson Jacob Johnson co-director



“ YOU DO NEED TO HAVE A SOLID DOP ON-BOARD TO CAPTURE SOME GREAT SHOTS ”





Is there a vibrant filmmaking community in the vicinity?

I would say there are a large amount of filmmakers within Hampshire and Dorset, as not only do we have local filmmakers, but we have what is classed as one of the best universities here in Bournemouth for training media students to a very high standard. So the scope is getting bigger and bigger. Also, there are a lot of short films shot in this area and some high-profile feature films too starring well-known actors.

capital is a lot easier as there are more of them and here does have its problems, but patience is the key; the right actors and crew members are out there and do come along. You just have to spent a little longer looking for them.



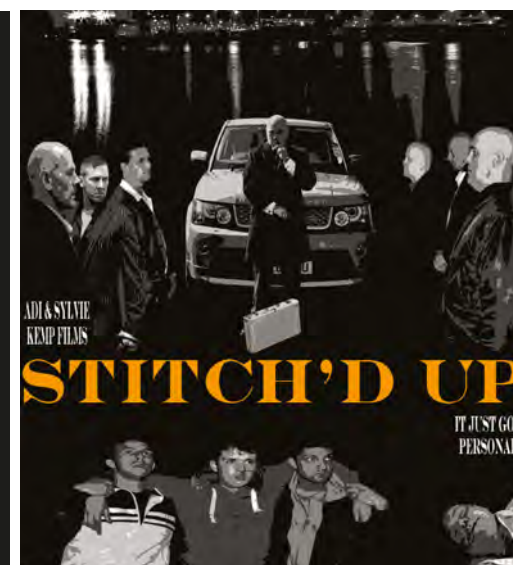
So far you've produced some interesting work - tell us about the key projects that you've completed to date...

Why Me was our first project where we aimed to produce a film to put into schools to help prevent bullying. But, when it came to looking for locations to film, we hit our first barrier

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR FILM PRODUCTIONS TO DATE?

So far, myself and Sylvie have written, produced and directed a couple of short films, one of which was an anti-bullying 10 minute short called Why Me, which we hoped we would be able to show in schools to try and help prevent bullying. The other one, which is now complete, is our latest project called Stitch'd Up, which is a dark comedy gangster film. We do have more projects in mind too. We produced a TV comedy pilot, The Healing Game, for actor Tim Faraday,

which starred Russell Grant (Strictly Come Dancing), Lee MacDonald (aka Zamo from Grange Hill) and also Tim Faraday himself (Snatch and other TV and Film appearances), which won a Best Comedy award at the Crystal Palace International Film Festival. In addition, we co-produced, alongside Daniel Coffey a feature film called Any Minute Now, for a Fordingbridge-based director/writer/filmmaker called Peter Goddard, which is due to be released this year. We also produced a 10-minute short called The Sharpest Knife for Reading-based actor/writer Kevin Hallett and within that production we also helped to cast the actors and found the location for the film.





Characters Archie and Tommy

as the schools we approached didn't want us to film there because it had a sad ending. The schools didn't want to know because they didn't want their reputation ruined. So, in the end, we contacted a developer who was about to demolish a school near Christchurch and we were given permission to film there, which worked out very well. We also found our next barrier once the film was completed because not one school we contacted wanted to even show the film, again because of the sad ending. But, as we all know, there have been reports of victims that have taken their own lives to get away from the bullying they've been

up against. The film was written with the pupils in mind and the script wasn't over complicated, while there was hardly any violence because we wanted to concentrate more on the emotional side rather than the physical aspect. But the schools in this area just didn't want to know, which was a shame. Working on Tim Faraday's project, The Healing Game, has opened a few more doors for us, which has been great as Lee MacDonald (perhaps still best known for his Zammo McGuire role in Grange Hill) has worked with us on more projects since. It was a great pleasure to work with Russell Grant too and he is an absolute star.

Are you happy dealing with all aspects of the filmmaking process or are there areas that particularly appeal?

We both enjoy every aspect, from taking the ideas and putting them to script through to the casting process. But actually seeing it all come together from the rehearsals then being filmed is the real buzz. Watching the actors bring our vision to life is great, then seeing the end result of everyone's efforts and commitment towards the projects is all worthwhile. Sylvie also enjoys the acting side of things too, and doing the make-up, so we do make up a really good team.



Boxer, McCoy, Frankie and John Jo



Stitch'd Up is to be your most ambitious project to date - can you tell us more about it?

Yes, this is definitely our most ambitious project to date. *Stitch'd Up* is a dark comedy gangster film and probably better classed as a mini feature more than a short, because it runs in at just over 46 minutes. We have been really lucky to have had such talented actors on this production. We had a lot of fun making this film, but we have had trying times too. There was a 90% change of actors, a complete change of crew and locations and also the script had to

be rewritten. But, we can honestly say, it's been for the better. We were lucky enough to get permission to film for two very long days, from early morning to late at night, at the Gerald Beauchamp Photography Studio, Ringwood. We then went to Southampton on location at Air Cargo, where we had the use of this whole warehouse for 12 hours and then to Poole and Bournemouth, and the last morning of filming for the final scenes was back in Ringwood. So, all in all, it only took 4½ days to shoot.

The project was then put in the capable hands of Peter Goddard, who did the editing for us and then to Kris Luckin, our DoP, for the final online edit. This project has taken two years

from the initial ideas in our heads to the final result. We are so proud of everyone who has stuck by us and committed and given up their time to this project.

What inspired it and do you think there's still room for this type of movie given that there are many like it. What gives it a unique edge?

Our inspiration came from the love of gangster films and also directors such as Paul Tanter and Guy Richie. Yes, there will always be room for gangster films because the British public can't get enough of them. There seems



The guys go for another take



Sylvie applies make-up on the set

to be an insatiable appetite for this kind of genre. The unique edge to *Stitch'd Up* is the comedic undertone acting as a foil to the underlying menacing aspect of the main character.

Is there anything about this film, or the other work that you've completed that would surprise people? Presumably you're used to working with pretty minimal budgets?

Yes, on both of the short films we've written we have used a combination of amateur and professional actors, but with a little bit of

guidance and rehearsals you wouldn't be able to tell the difference between them. We are very used to working with little or no budget. *Stitch'd Up* was made for just under £650. It's surprising how cheap you can actually shoot a film for, considering the running time is 46.20 minutes. Why Me had a total budget of £200.

Do you think things are getting easier for filmmakers now that technology is getting better and cheaper?

It is getting easier for filmmakers because the cameras offer better quality and are more manageable and compact, allowing

Tommy behind-the-scenes



TELL US ABOUT THE CREW AND KIT THAT WAS USED ON *STITCH'D UP*...

We had a very good crew behind us, starting with our co-director Jayson Jacob Johnson who has the technical knowledge. He has been to Bournemouth University and studied media, whereas I have no training whatsoever. My training has been things I've picked up along the way, from being on different sets and I also know what I want to see. So relaying my thoughts to Jayson, we would then discuss our thoughts to our DoP, Kris Luckin. He's a freelance DoP and has worked on several sets, and uses the Sony EX3 camera and Go-Pro mini, so we were very lucky to find Kris as he has been a great asset to the production. On sound, we had Jordan Garrett and Kevin Bowdler, who have had no training at all, they've both just got a good ear to pick up alien noises. Kevin also wrote the score for the film - he penned the lyrics using the story from the script, got together with a group called Zander and the Keys and produced the great score that we have in the finished film. On the point of sound - we fed the audio directly into the camera to save on lip-syncing. I have to say that going down that route certainly saved a lot of time when it came down to the editing of the film, it was a really useful tactic.



you to move around. They're much better for getting those shots that ordinarily you wouldn't be able to get with the bigger film equipment. These days, modern cameras like the Canon 5D and 6D are the ideal models to use. The 65D is also particularly great for beginners who have never used a camera for filmmaking duties.

Any tips for the top? You've done some writing, so is a good script really the key?

Yes, a good script is definitely the key for a great film, but it's also down to the actors to bring the film to life. You also need to have a solid DoP on-board in order to capture some great shots. The same goes for the editor and the rest of the crew. All are very important for producing a great end result. ■

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Interview Edit Workflows using Premiere Pro CS6

Learn how to remove lulls in dialogue and cover video jitter with J and L-cuts using Premiere Pro with Paul Ekert, the author of Mastering Adobe Premiere Pro CS6

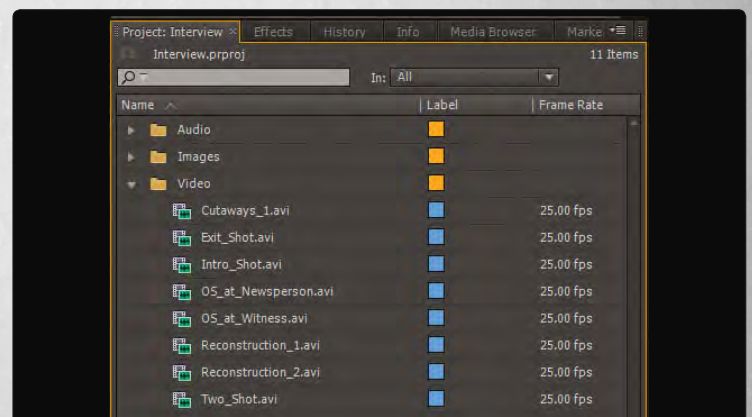
In this tutorial we'll look at how to enhance the opening of a news article using cutaways to cover up lulls in the presenter's dialogue. You'll do this using the Extract and Overwrite function to demonstrate a more elegant workflow than typically found with the Razor/Delete method, and you'll use a smattering of keyboard shortcuts to show how easy it is to get a frame accurate edit without the mouse. There is, of course, nothing wrong with using the mouse to edit your work but, if you can occasionally break away from your mouse addiction, you will find a streamlined workflow hidden beneath the assumed mysticism of popular keyboard shortcuts.

The insertion of cutaway footage will also create a J-Cut to the start

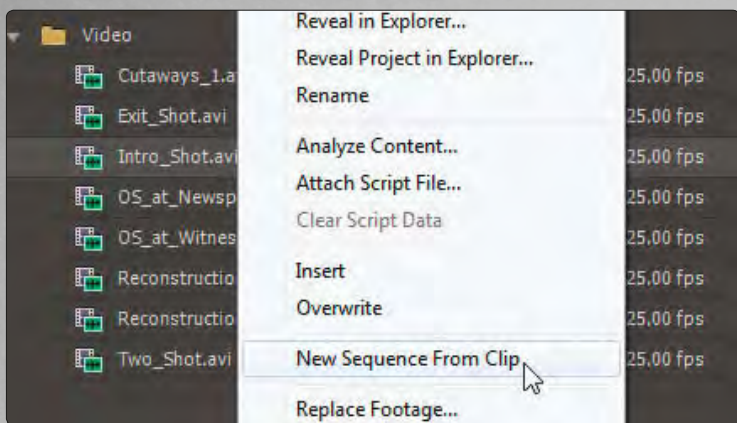
of the news article and just for fun, we will also create an L-Cut using a simulation of a shaky mobile phone shot, one that's altered to replace day with night. Don't worry if you don't know what some, or indeed any of these terms are, as all will become clear as you progress through each of the steps on offer here.

This tutorial is based on a chapter from Mastering Adobe Premiere Pro CS6, available from Packt Publishing. Each chapter is project-based and footage for most chapters is supplied, including this one. Before starting this tutorial, pay a visit to the Publisher's page (tinyurl.com/a6syu3d) and then click on the Support tab in the middle of that page. Here you can download the Zip file for chapter 3 that contains some of the material used in this

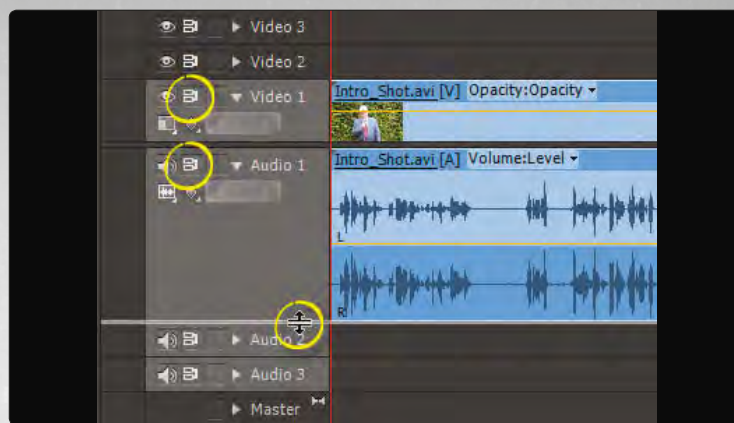
article (47800T_Chap_3_Protect_the_Innocent_Interview_Edit_Techniques.zip). Once you've finished downloading it, unpack the contents to the hard drive you've dedicated for storing your video material. When this is completed you're ready to proceed with the rest of the tutorial. So, without further ado, let's get started.



Import your footage... Create a new Bin called Video and open this in the Project Browser (hold down the Ctrl or Cmd key before double-clicking the Bin if you don't want to open a new window). Import the video clips you downloaded from Packt Publishing into this area. Press Shift+1 to make the Project Panel active, then Ctrl or Cmd +PageUp to switch to List View. Proceed when your Project panel looks something like the above image.

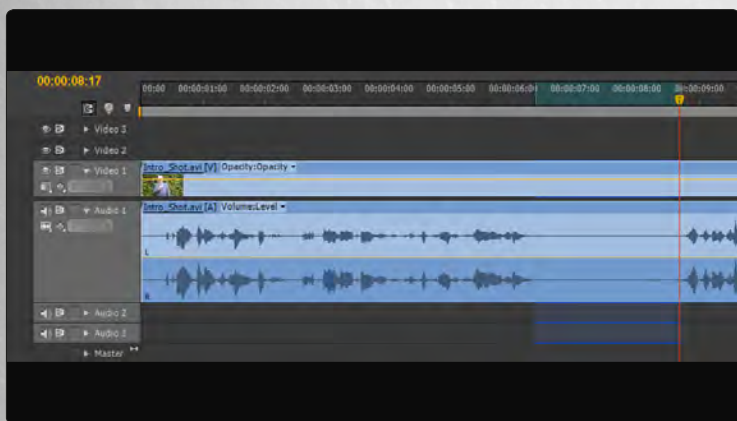


Set up a New Sequence... Create a new Timeline Sequence that exactly matches the properties of the clip by right-clicking the Intro_Shot.avi clip and choosing New Sequence From Clip from the context menu. Once the Sequence appears, press \ (Backslash) to zoom the Timeline to the entire clip. Creating a sequence in this way cuts down on render times and increases the chances of real-time playback.

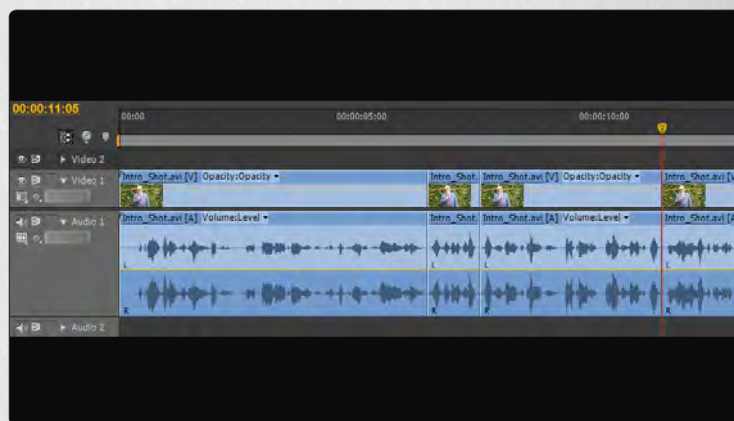


Set up the Timeline for easy editing...

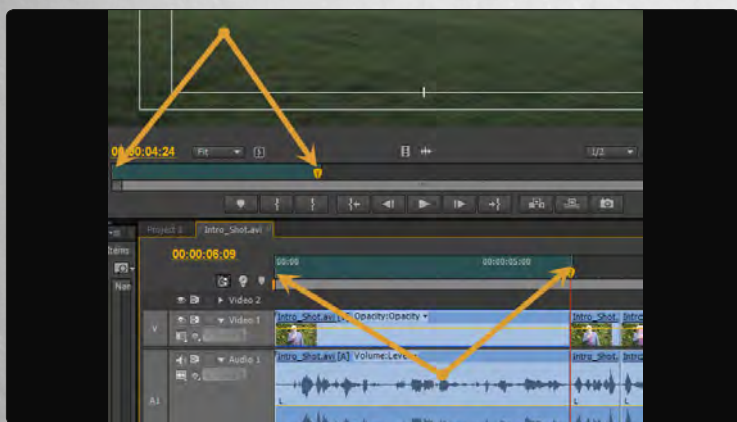
In step 4 you'll remove silent lulls from the Intro_Shot.avi clip. To make this process easier, open the Audio 1 track (hint - a small triangle next to Audio 1). Expand the displayed wave form by placing the cursor at the bottom of the track area, then clicking and dragging it downwards. Make sure the Sync Lock icons (circled) are toggled on for both the Video 1 and Audio 1 tracks.



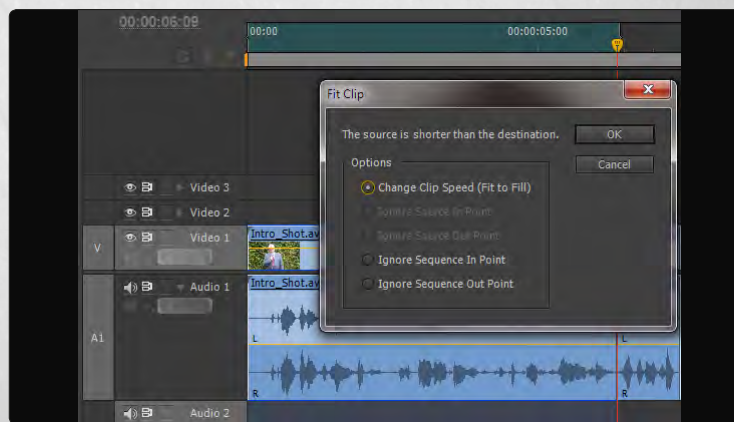
Mark out an audio lull... Presenters are human so the audio will contain lulls, but they're easy to fix. Press Shift+3 to set the Timeline as active and use the J, K, and L keys to move the timeline indicator to the start of the first lull (06:09). It can be clearly identified by the flat wave form. Press the letter I (i) to set an in-point. Move the timeline indicator to the end of the lull (08:17) and press the letter O to set an out-point.



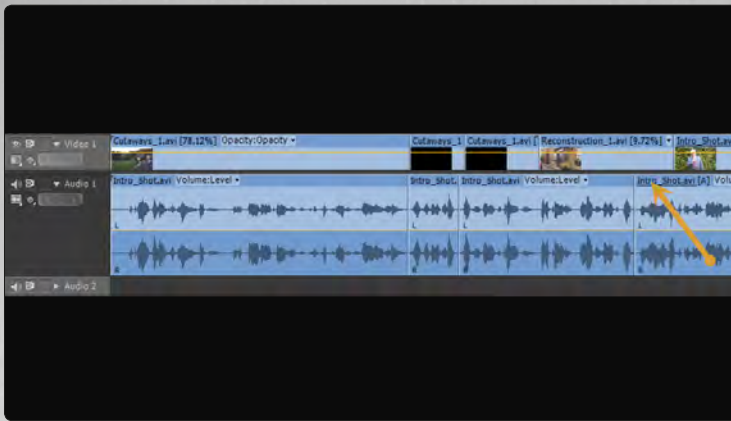
Extract the audio lull... You're ready to remove the unwanted silence. First, make sure the header areas of both Video 1 and Audio 1 are light grey, indicating they are active, and then press the Hash key (#) to Extract this section. The Extract function will remove the video and audio inside the marked area and then close the gap. Repeat Steps 4 and 5 to remove silences from Timeline areas 07:11 to 08:10 and then 11:05 to 12:13.



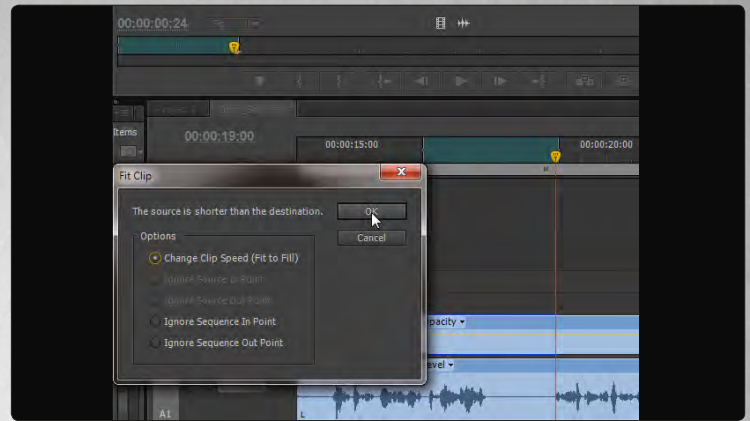
Marking out cutaways... Playback the timeline now and you'll see visual jumps where you removed the areas of silence. Cover these with cut-away footage that matches the dialogue. Double-click the Cutaways_1.avi clip to open it in the Source Monitor and set an in-point at 00:00 and out-point at 04:24. Switch to the Timeline (Shift+3) and create an in-point at the start of the sequence and out-point at 06:09.



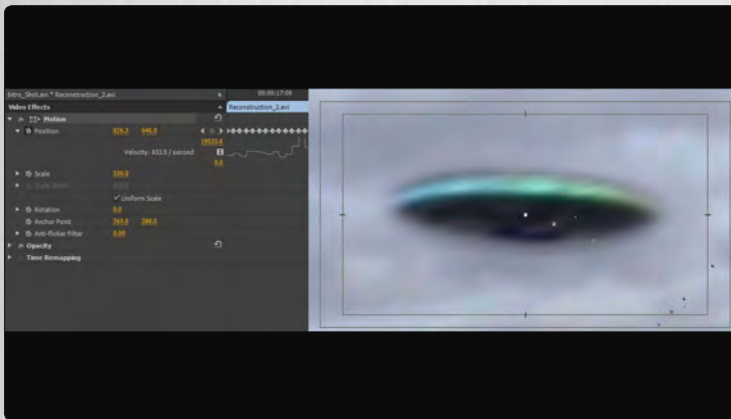
Add cutaways and create a J-Cut... To create a J-Cut you need to overwrite the content on Video 1 but keep Audio 1 as it is. Click on the Audio 1 track header so it turns dark grey (Protected). Switch to the Source Monitor (Shift+2) and press '.' (Period) to send the marked area of the Cutaways_1.avi clip to the Timeline. When the Fit Clip window appears, select Change Clip Speed (Fit to Fill), and click OK.



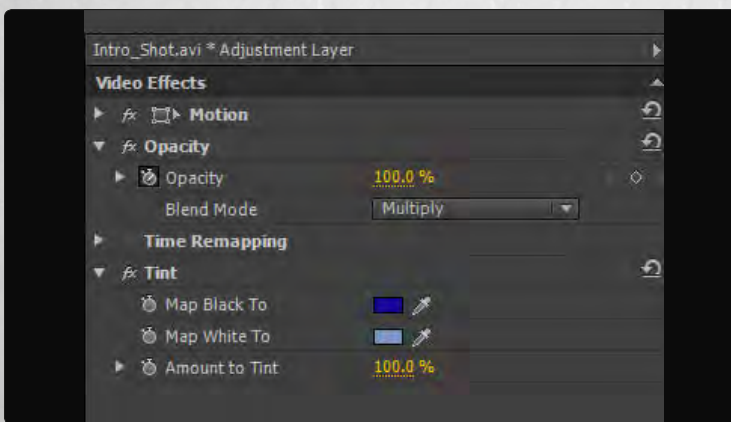
Creating a J-Cut part 2... Repeat to add more cutaways. Hold down K and dab at J or L to move either way. The edits should be at the following: Shop cutaway in-point 05:00, out-point 09:24. Timeline in-point 06:10, out-point 07:13. Church cutaway in-point 10:00, out-point 14:24. Timeline in-point 07:14, out-point 09:03. Pub cutaway in-point 04:11, out-point 04:17. Timeline; in-point 09:04 out-point 12:00.



Create an L-Cut... An L-Cut is the opposite of a J-Cut and is where the dialogue leads into a new clip. Double-click the Reconstruction_2.avi to open it in the Source Monitor and set an in-point at the start and out-point about 24 frames later. Press Shift+3 to set the Timeline as active, then set an in-point at 16:10 and out-point at 19:00. Press '.' (Period) to send this to the Timeline and use the Fit to Fill option when it appears.



Create a handheld look... Now simulate the Mobile Phone shaky handheld look. Click on Reconstruction_2.avi on Video 1 and press Shift+5 to open the Effect Controls panel. Open Motion and increase the scale by 330%. Toggle animation ON for the Position parameters and move the UFO into the centre of the frame. Advance 2 frames and move the UFO to a random area of the frame. Repeat this every 2 frames.



Create a night for day look... Open the Project panel and create a new Adjustment Layer. Drag it onto Video 2 above the UFO clip and make it the same length. Press Shift+7 to open the Effects panel and type Tint into the search box. Drag Tint onto the Adjustment Layer and press Shift+5. Open Tint settings and change Map Black To a dark blue, and Map White To a lighter blue colour. Change the Blend Mode to Multiply.



Final playback... Playback this sequence and you'll see a clear improvement. The dialogue no longer contains pregnant pauses and you have meaningful cutaways constructed from various bits of footage. However, there's still a lot to do here, including adding a witness reconstruction, creating a pixelated mask to protect the identity of the 'witness', using Over the Shoulder shots, and adding lower third titles for the reporter. If you want to take this project further, all these workflows can be found in Chapter 3 of Mastering Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 by Paul Ekert. See also www.paulekert.com.

Insert a 3D object into your films using Premiere Pro CS6



Learn a quick and dirty way to create and add a 3D object to a film scene using Premiere Pro with Paul Ekert, author of Mastering Adobe Premiere Pro CS6

The ability to create and animate 3D objects to represent pretty much anything you can imagine generates some interesting options if you're a filmmaker, such as the inclusion of something you couldn't possibly afford; like a helicopter, or a large mechanical robot. In this tutorial you'll learn a quick and dirty method for creating and inserting just such an object into a background scene using iClone 5, Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 and the Ultra Key filter (standard with CS6). Sure, this is a pretty basic example, but it serves to demonstrate how easy it is to use these programs in combination to create some really cool 3D effects.

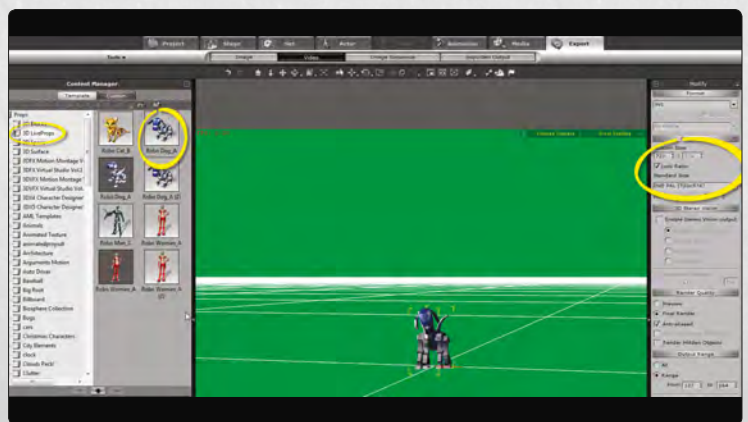
This particular example uses iClone 5 from Reallusion, a 3D animation software package for under a hundred pounds. This is a 'Template' animation tool that allows you to buy content that includes customisable animations already built in. iClone 5 is available as a free trial from Reallusion and the Robo Dog used in this tutorial is part of the free content. Visit tinyurl.com/6p8so4j and sign up for the free demo. You'll then be able to use the full version of iClone 5 for 30 days, although some export restrictions apply.

To complete this tutorial you will also need some files used in a chapter from Mastering Adobe Premiere Pro CS6, available from Packt Publishing. Visit

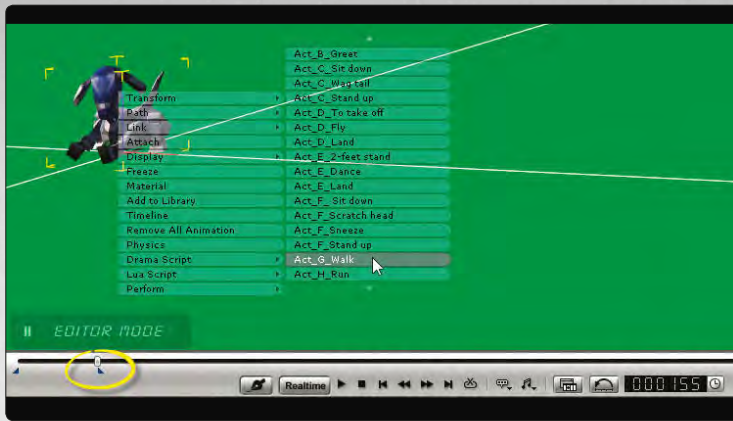
the Publisher's page (tinyurl.com/a6syu3d) and then click on the Support tab in the middle of that page. Here you can download the Zip file for chapter 5 (4780OT_Chap 5_Visual_Effects_Muzzle_Flashes_Laser_Beams_and_Clones.zip), which includes the background needed in steps 4 to 6. It also includes a Mechbot

creature that was animated and rendered in iClone, and can be used to replace the Robo Dog featured in this tutorial.

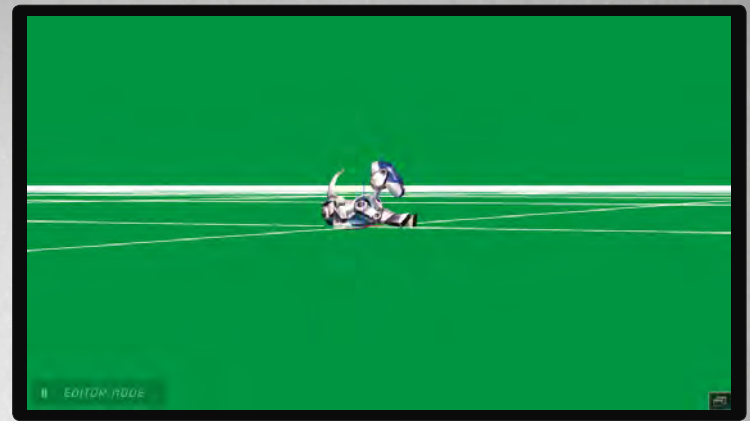
Once you've downloaded and installed the trial for iClone 5 and then downloaded and unzipped the chapter 5 content from Packt Publishing, you are ready to begin/ So, let's get started.



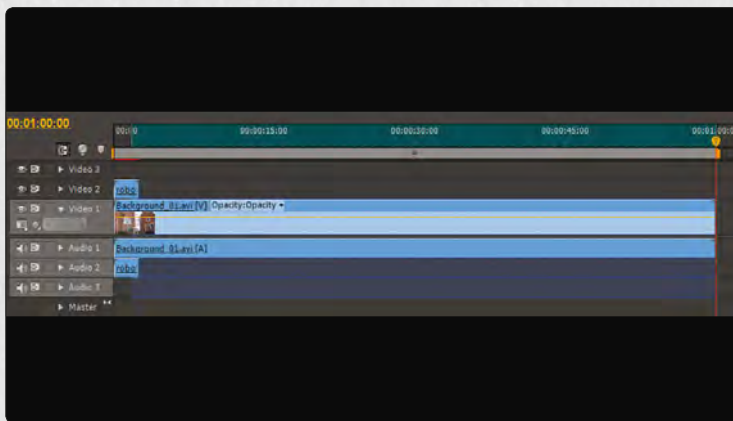
Creating your 3D object... Open iClone and click on the Stage tab; set the Color Background to Green. Now click on the Set tab and select the 3D LiveProp folder to display the various robots stored here. Double-click Robo Dog_A to insert it into the scene. Finally, click on the Export Tab and set the output size to DVD PAL (720x576).



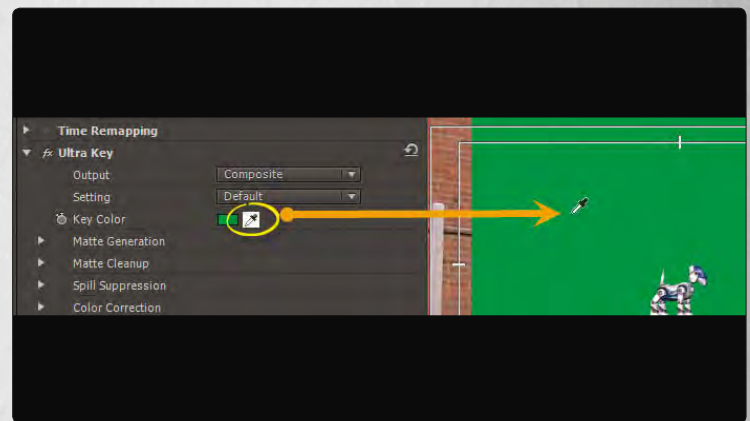
Animate it... Right-click on the Robo Dog and select Perform from the context menu. Inside the Perform menu, select Act_G_Walk. Wait for the animation to complete, then right-click the Robo Dog again and select Perform > Act_C_Sit down. Once again, allow the animation to play out, and then move the END render area marker (circled) to sit under the current position of the timeline cursor.



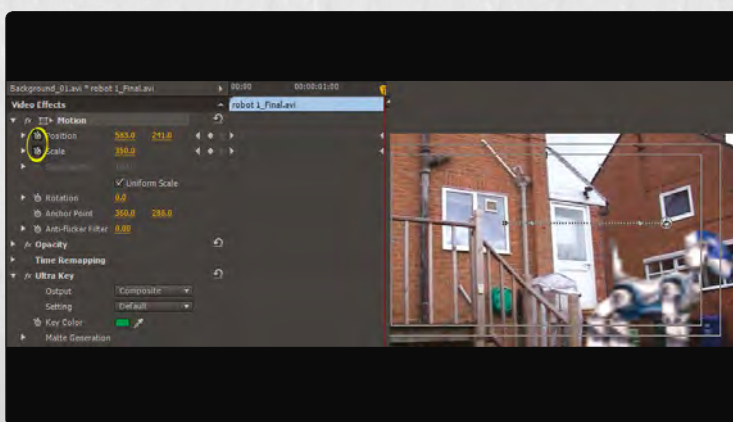
Alter the angle... The angle of the camera is not right for the scene. So, click the Robo Dog to select it, then with the ALT key and the RMB held down, rotate the camera around the Robo Dog. Click the Export tab and make sure AVI is selected before pressing the Export button at the bottom of the screen. Choose a place to save your file and hit Enter, then choose Uncompressed and hit Enter to start the render.



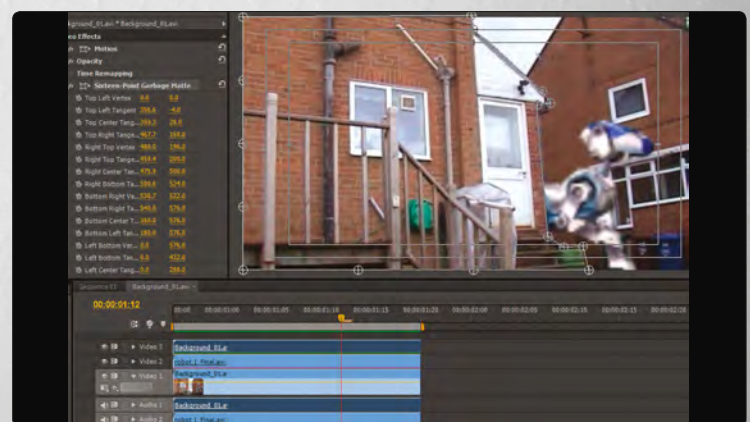
Import it... Create a new project in Premiere Pro, import the Robo Dog clip, and also the Background_01.avi you downloaded. Place the Background_01.avi on Video 1 and the Robo Dog clip on Video 2. Move the Timeline Indicator to a frame BEFORE the dog sits and set an in-point. Move the Timeline Indicator to the end and set an out-point. Hit hash (#) to remove this area and then zoom to the new clip length.



Remove the green screen... Open the Effects panel (Shift+7) and type Ultra into the search box. Drag & drop the Ultra Key filter onto the Robo Dog Clip on Video 2. Click on the Robo Dog and open the Effects Controls panel (Shift+5). Dial open the Ultra Key parameters and click on the Eyedropper tool. Click anywhere inside the green area of the Program monitor to remove the green screen.



Robo Dog lives... Place the Timeline Indicator at the last visible frame of the Robo Dog clip and open the Motion area in the Effects Controls panel. Alter scale to 350% and position to x=583 and y=241. Toggle ON Animation for Scale and Position (the Stopwatch icons - circled). Move the Timeline indicator to the start of sequence and alter scale to 300% and Position to x=282 and y=241. The increase really helps to sell it.



Create a mask... Hold down Alt and the LMB then drag a copy of the Background_01.avi clip up above the Video 2 track. A new track (Video 3) will be created when you let go of the LMB. Click the new Background_01.avi on Video 3 to select it, open the Effects tab and locate the Sixteen Point Garbage Matte. Add this to the clip on Video 3 and position the right-hand points of this matte to look like the image above.



ON LOCATION:

During a visit to the West Pomerania area of Poland, Rob Clymo discovers that all manner of options are open to the roving filmmaker

POLAND



Poland proves to be a place that's full of surprises, particularly if you're in the market for making films. On a recent trip there, where we were shooting footage for a travel video, the area of West Pomerania, which covers the top left-hand chunk of the country right next to the German border, proved to be a real revelation.

The trip started off, naturally, in the rain-sodden surroundings of Stansted airport. Arriving there late at night on the too-expensive Stansted Express and making eye-contact with row upon row of zombie-like folks waiting for the first flight next morning, I was relieved to know I'd be enjoying a few hours in the relative splendour of the Premier Inn down the road. Granted, I had to spend the night with a picture of a grimacing

Lenny Henry staring back at the bed but you can't have everything and, aside from that, it was perfect. Good location, fair prices and chirpy service - a place I'd therefore recommend for any impoverished filmmakers who don't fancy spending the night sleeping next to their valuable kit back at the inhospitable terminal building.

On the way

Next morning, it's still raining and I'm anticipating more of it at the other end. However, as we descend through the wispy clouds and touchdown at Goleniów airport, the weather is sunny and decidedly, well, summery. Yeah, remember that? Travelling out of the airport and down the highway reveals a part of Poland that is incredibly green and very wooded. It's certainly a



far cry from the more frequently visited likes of Krakov or Warsaw, although the former location is still seen as a superb place to visit if you're after a thick slice of history. Mind you, the only problem is that you'll also be dodging the stag and hen parties that have been heading that way ever since the budget airlines put it on their route maps. Here though, it's much quieter.

After a swift check-in at the Szczecin Radisson Blu and a hearty hotel lunch, we kick things off with a city tour. On the face of it this seems like it might not take that long, but as our guide begins to explain, it's scheduled to include a tour of a former wartime underground shelter. We'll also be able to see segments of a recently completed film, called *The Great Escape*, which you can read more about in our dedicated boxout in this very feature over on page 83. After that, the tour is going to on around the city on the trail of *The Great Escape* itself, highlighting the various locations that were used to complete the film.

Szczecin is actually closer to Berlin than it is to Warsaw or Krakov and it's easy enough to get around on foot, which is a relief when you're carrying cameras and equipment. Also known as Stettin, this is a location that has all manner of influences from Swedish, Prussian, German and Soviet influence. That in itself makes it an ideal

place for filming, due to the varied architecture and diverse collection of people found there. A couple of notable routes will take you around the main points of interest, one being the City Tourist Route while the other, the Golden Route, is aimed at walkers and cyclists. Trams and buses are also plentiful if you need to get around a little quicker too. The city is also dubbed Poland's 'green lung' and it's easy to see why with multiple green spaces and a waterfront that is being rapidly redeveloped to allow visitors to enjoy the best that the Oder River has to offer.

Of course, the main purpose of the visit is to get some decent footage, so we have a shortlist of locations to film over the space of

Germany and the Baltic Sea for centuries. Unfortunately, much of Szczecin was destroyed during fierce fighting in World War II, but the replica castle is impressive. If you climb to the top of the bell tower you can take in views right across the city. Another bonus with this location is that you're not battling with thousands of tourists the whole time, unlike some locations that are victims of their own success. After that stop, the rest of the afternoon is taken up trundling around the city shooting more footage before heading back to the Radisson Blu and making the most of the rather excellent spa facilities that are on offer.

Joining the team

By now everyone has met everyone else, and other travellers in our party include a couple of full-time travel filmmakers, who spend their time jetting around the world making promotional videos that cover every corner of the globe. Business appears to be good, even though the recession has meant that budgets have been cut by many of their regular clients. However, as is the case with many people discovering the lure of filmmaking on the move, you can get great results with some decent kit and without the need for large amounts of money. Often, if you get it right, the end results can rival footage produce by some of the top digital production houses.

Ex-BBC man Leslie Graham (pictured left) is the perfect example of this. He's never far from his trusty Canon and a robust-looking tripod and spends the whole time ducking and diving in an attempt to capture as much of a snapshot of the area as is possible. When we visit the bunker where part of *The Great Escape* was filmed, he seems a little bemused that I'm shooting such long clips. But, as I explain later, this is more to do with capturing what our guide is talking about as we trudge through the fascinating maze of subterranean tunnels so I can transcribe it into an interview later on. Leslie, meanwhile, has got his shooting-on-the-go routine honed down to a fine art. He keeps his clips short and sweet, then transfers his new footage over to a MacBook Pro when he gets back to the hotel each evening. He then edits and fine-tunes it all using Final Cut Pro. That said, when I see him checking out of the hotel the next day he's got a fairly hefty suitcase, along with that beefy tripod of his plus a stack of other kit, which obviously means a whole lot more fun and games at airports.

The Saturday shoot

Next morning, we leave the hotel and head for Wolin, which is home to a Slavs and Viking Centre, which appears to be the perfect place to capture some footage

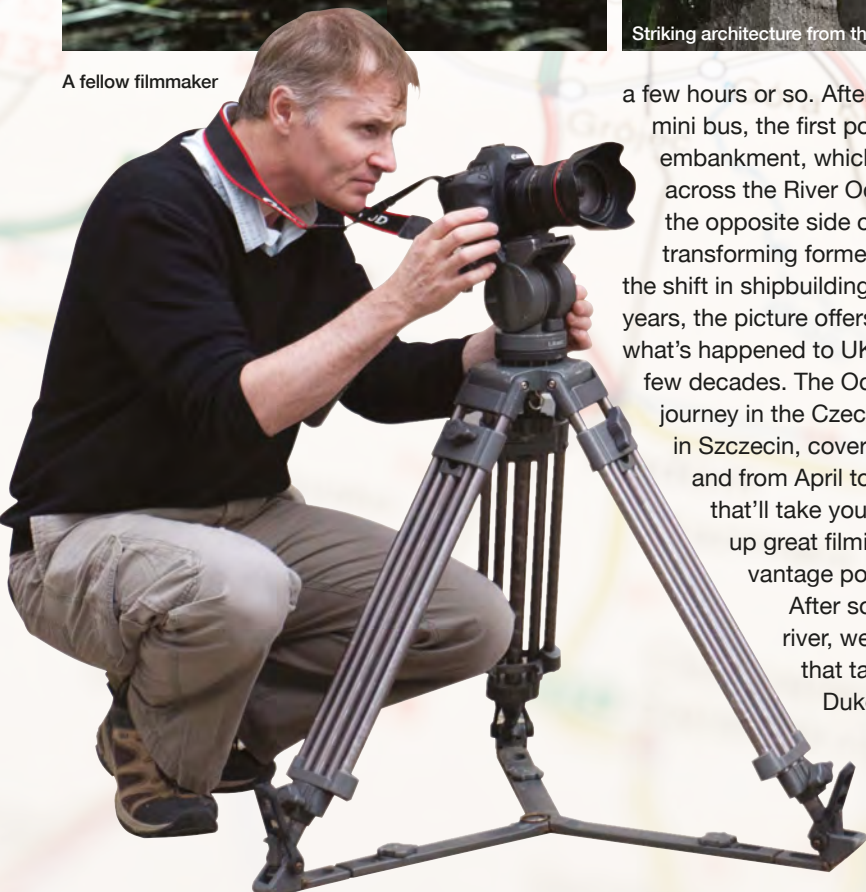


Pic: Marcin Bielecki



Striking architecture from the past

A fellow filmmaker



a few hours or so. After loading the kit into our mini bus, the first point of call is the Chobry embankment, which offers up excellent views across the River Oder. Meanwhile, over on the opposite side of the estuary lies the fast transforming former dockyard area. Due to the shift in shipbuilding to Asia in more recent years, the picture offers up a similar vision to what's happened to UK shipyards in the past few decades. The Oder River itself begins its journey in the Czech Republic and ends here in Szczecin, covering a distance of 854Km and from April to October there are boats that'll take you on a tour of river, offering up great filming options from the water vantage point.

After some filming around the river, we head up to the area that takes in the Pomeranian Dukes Castle. Pomerania was a region stretching right across Poland,

to beef up the more traditional tourist fare we've been getting so far. It turns out not to be a disappointment either because, as we pull up the muddy lane towards the centre, we're surrounded by a group of individuals all dressed in authentic costumes. Heading through the imposing wooden gates, we're taken back in time and it almost feels like we're in a movie ourselves. Wolin was once the largest and richest port in Europe, being a central hub and crossing point for the many different trade routes that spanned the globe.

Due to its geographical proximity to Scandinavia, the region is also steeped in Viking history and, today, attracts thousands of visitor's eager to sample a part of the

distant past. If you're looking for a ready-to-go location for filming this part of history then this place is ideal, as its got the lot from traditional buildings, which have been put together using ancient techniques, through to enthusiastic volunteers who spend their days toggled up in traditional clothes. The attraction is run by the Slavs and Viking Centre Association and every year is also host to a giant Slavs and Vikings Festival. This features battle re-enactments, which from the footage we saw, has a real no-holds-barred air of authenticity. When we ask if anyone gets hurt, the guide nods and simply says 'Sometimes...'.
Needless to say, we find that there are plenty of filming opportunities thanks to the variety of individuals kitted out in traditional garb, carrying out their everyday duties from maintaining the armour through to producing clothes of the period. There are also people cooking different foods, from traditional breads over an open fire through to a rather large man who's roasting similarly sizeable chickens in a clay oven. Later on we huddle inside one of the darkened huts, gather round

a table, then tuck into a bit of the bird. It turns out to be cooked perfectly although it gets washed down with a rather more modern coffee instead of a goblet of something rather stronger. Maybe next time...

Next stop

Our next port of call is Świnoujście, a short drive from the Viking centre out to the coast. Although the weather isn't so great, it's still a great place to do some filming. First up, we jump off the bus at the base of the huge lighthouse there, which is sandwiched between a vast and decidedly unglamorous tarmacadam plant, the Baltic itself and an impressive old military location known as Gerhard Fort. We start with the lighthouse and it isn't exactly a bundle of laughs lugging cameras and a large tripod to the top of the said structure, counting 300 steps along the way. Nevertheless, the view from the top is superb, even on a less than perfect day and we shoot some footage while waving bon voyage to one of the passing ferries en route to Denmark.

Close by, it's hard to avoid the fact that





there's a massive development going on which, the guide explains, is the base for a new pipeline that will transport gas supplies from the Middle East in the near future. I'd noticed the part finished pipework for the last few kilometres and the scale of the concrete and steel engineering work that was going on was impressive to say the least. Anyone after an industrial backdrop for a short feature would find it, and that rather bleak tarmac plant, a great place to film.

Gerhard Fort, meanwhile, situated across the road in amongst the trees, is an altogether different kettle of fish, one that comes complete with tank traps, trenches and a sentry box at the entrance. We walk in through the entrance only to be met by a guide who clearly loves his job. Saying that, his authentic costume is spoiled a little by the fact that he's wearing designer glasses and sports braces. Nevertheless, it's a ten out of ten for his delivery as he takes charge of the tour by, well, shouting a lot. Of course, if you're trying to do any kind of filming then having someone like this tagging along the whole time can turn out to be intrusive. But, he proves useful in terms of information and rolls off the history of the place. Anyone into second world war stuff will find this part of Poland fascinating, although the many conflicts that have raged here down the years will take you much farther back in history than the last seventy years or so.

Going on water

According to our schedule, the next part of the itinerary takes us on a boat trip. After walking to the edge of a pretty choppy estuary, it seems the boat trip is more of a brief lift across to the other side. However, getting into a wildly bobbing rigid inflatable with a stack of valuable camera equipment is always nerve-wracking and this is no exception. Leslie advises me to cover up my camera, but I decide to stick with it and cling to the back of the drivers seat as



Stepping back in time at Gerhard Fort

we speed across the waves. It's blowing a gale, but as we get across into more sheltered water it turns to be quite enjoyable and also offers up some great views of the local scenery.

After a late lunch at a cosy little waterside



restaurant in Świnoujście, we head by mini bus to the more touristy coast and beach area, which is bustling with weekenders trying to make the most of the blustery conditions. Later on we begin our journey to the next location of Kolobrzeg, via an interesting car ferry across the water and then via road. It's a bit of a trek, but our arrival at the five star Aquarius Spa hotel more than makes up for being cooped up in a van for a while. This nearly new location is superb, with a really funky multi-coloured glass exterior and rooms that are huge compared to many similarly starred hotels in other parts of Europe. There's even a nightclub in the basement, one that Leslie attempts to film in later that evening before being bundled to one side by burly bouncers. Prior to that, we chow down



on some incredible food. So far then it's a resounding thumbs-up to Kołobrzeg.

The Sunday shoot

When daylight arrives, the spa town reveals that it sits right on the edge of the Baltic Sea and boasts mind-blowing wide sandy beaches with a tree-lined backdrop, although we had no idea we were so close to the sea on arrival the night before. To be honest it turns out to be something of a surprise and not the sort of place you'd expect to visit while in Poland. In fact, had the weather been sunnier, you could have easily been fooled into thinking you were in a beach location just about anywhere. Apparently the sandy beaches have been given a helping hand due to the constantly shifting coastline, and the addition of new groynes means that the pristine sands are now another feature that brings countless tourists into the area each year. Leslie even ambles down the beach with his camera and tripod to check the water - needless to say it's not warm...

There's been a lot of investment further back from the sea too, with the local streets that run parallel to the beach being very modern and boasting impressive new hotels. Each one appears to have its own spa features and associated supporting staff. In fact, it turns out to be an ideal place to investigate by Leslie the cameraman as he and his filming partner have been producing a documentary on medical tourism. Poland is now the place to go for many tourists, keen to get everything from dental to open-heart surgery work done, while sensibly enjoying a holiday at the same time. You can even spend your time there drinking Jantar, a bottled mineral water that's hard to find anywhere else.

I'm initially a little sceptical until we take a tour of the place and get to see first-hand what sort of treatments are undertaken here.

We head down into the basement of one hotel and see a variety of different rooms, all created specifically for different kinds of treatment. It's an excellent place to film, and the locals are very obliging with people sitting in baths of mud and being wrapped up in peat in order for us to get the footage that we're after. There's even the chance to taste some of the fruit shakes that the staff have prepared in order to show off what they offer, although you get the feeling that they'll have a suitable cleansing effect if you have too many. Nevertheless, one of the other journalists on the trip polishes off five, before heading off for what could only have been one very messy massage.

But that's why most people come to this area it seems, for treatments of one kind or another and a bit of rest and relaxation. For the people on our trip, including us, who've come to get a varied snapshot of the Polish travel and tourism industry, we've certainly seen it all. There are some incredible locations to be found in the West Pomerania area, from history and ancient cultural hotspots through to state-of-the-art modern buildings and facilities. What's more, you can get your work done here both cheaply

and efficiently. And, after you've finished filming for the day, it's also possible to sit back and relax, knowing that you're enjoying some high-end facilities for a fraction of the cost of doing it elsewhere in Europe. Even factoring in a low-cost airline flight to the area, Poland still comes in as great value for money, plus if you look in the right places, some of the food is sublime too.

Back to Blighty

Monday morning sees an early start and us retracing our steps back along the leafy highways to Goleniów airport. All in all, the trip was a great success and it was also the perfect chance to try out a fab Panasonic GH3 along the way.

Useful addresses

The Polish National Tourist Office

www.poland.travel

Polish Spa Centre in Kołobrzeg

www.spacitykolobrzeg.pl/

Marshall's Office of West Pomerania

<http://folder-en.wzp.pl/>

Premier Inn

www.premierinn.com ■



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE GREAT ESCAPE IN SZCZECIN

The Great Escape was one of the most important episodes of the World War Two. It was almost too daring and too ingenious to be true. But, it did happen. The Polish city of Szczecin, in those days the German town of Stettin, was of crucial importance in this context, because it was from here that two of the three who got away made their escape to Sweden. The Great Escape to the North, by Szczecin's director Andrew Fader, is a full Polish production. His aim has been to show the 'missing links' of the famous moment in history. The documentary is based on real



Pic: Marcin Bielecki

historical events. It's the story of two Norwegian RAF pilots who escaped through Szczecin to neutral Sweden. The subplot presents the fate of a Pole and British prisoner, two additional escapees who reached Szczecin. The film is set mostly in the city itself, but some of the scenes were shot on location - at the Museum of Allied Prisoners of War Martyrdom in



Pic: Marcin Bielecki



Pic: Marcin Bielecki

Żagań and on a boat, as seen here. The Great Escape to the North film is not just an exciting, emotional war drama; it is a fictionalised documentary. The main producer of the work was Magnolia Management Group and the co-producer was the West Pomeranian Film Fund and city of Żagań, where the legendary escape tunnel was dug. The premiere of the work is timed for release on the 70th anniversary of the Great Escape, in March 2014.



Pic: Marcin Bielecki

DOCUMENTARY SYNOPSIS:

On the night of the 24th of March 1944, one of the most daring prison breaks of WWII took place. Despite major problems, 76 out of 200 prisoners of war who had been supposed to escape, managed to leave one of the most secure camps in the Third Reich. The entrance to the main tunnel called 'Harry', which lead to the North, was hidden under a stove in hut number 104. The fugitives spread out over the whole German territory using forged documents and carried clothes, maps and followed prepared escape routes. One of these routes lead to the North, through Szczecin and the Baltic Sea to neutral Sweden. It was selected by two Norwegians - Lieutenant Jens Muller and Sergeant Per Bergsland. They spent two dramatic and very hectic days in Szczecin, trying to contact Swedish sailors who might help them. One of the safest places in the whole city, where ordinary Germans had no right to enter, was the French brothel.



The Szczecin route was also chosen by British serviceman Harry Day and the Pole Paul Tobolski. Their story is intriguing since, during their escape, they played the roles of a captured escapee and his German guard. In order to arrest the escapees, Nazi Germany called upon all available forces, including the army, auxiliary forces and even members of the Hitler Youth. The Great Escape to the North is the story of the two Norwegian RAF pilots who reached Szczecin. It was a desperate race against time, motivated only by their hunger for freedom.

According to British historians, the breakout from Stalag Luft III was of great importance in terms of propaganda. Although the loss was huge - 50 of the captured escapees were condemned to death - the Great Escape lifted many people's spirits; not only of fellow soldiers and civilians, but those who were fighting and imprisoned themselves.

THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Anna Cardus is a mature student studying Television and Film Production at Wirral Met College and has her sights set firmly on a filmmaking career

I'm a mature student studying level 3 Btec in Television and Film Production at Wirral Met College. I'm also older than everybody else in my class, including my tutors, which is interesting. I am actually even older than most of their parents. It provides an urgent reminder that I don't have a moment to lose, so at the weekends while they are out on the town partying until the early hours (and so they

should), I'm usually working on a script, or pre-production paperwork, or just watching filmmaking tutorials online. I am different from my fellow students in that they are on the course in order to progress on to university, or be employed in the industry. By contrast, I have already done all that. I have a diploma in midwifery, a degree in Health and Community Studies and post-graduate qualifications



in psychology and teaching. My former work was as a midwife, health promoter and adult education teacher. I also spent several years running my own business at the same time as raising three children.

Moving forwards

During my years as a stay-at-home mum, I channelled my latent creativity into writing poems, short stories and grappling with writing a novel. To me, creating stories is a wonderful thing and something that I cannot not do. Ideas come to me all the time, and I have notebooks full of plots, outlines, proposals and parts of scripts. My dilemma was that writing is such a solitary and even lonely business and I found it depressing. I like to work with people and not be constantly trapped in the house with only my imagination for company. So when the kids were older, and it was time for me to get back into the world of work, I thought long and hard about what I wanted to spend my time doing. Of course, I'm a massive film



fan (isn't everybody?), and I decided that getting out there and actually creating stories on film was a brilliant way to carry on telling stories and at the same time reviving the creative/artistic promise I showed at school all those years ago. I always used to be amazed when I watched films at how many people were

listed in the credits. I used to wonder why it took so many people to make a straightforward 90-minute film. I have begun to appreciate though how much goes on behind-the-scenes. The actual few days of filming is only a fraction of the overall process.

Making an effort

Like most courses of study, you only get out of it what you put in. During this two year TV and Film Production course, I can safely say that I have put my all into it, and it is paying off. My technical skills and industry knowledge have rocketed exponentially. Some of my younger classmates show a lot of filmmaking



Honing-up the dialog on Something New

potential and have great ideas, which I learn from, and I think they learn from my life experience also.

There are parts of the course that I don't enjoy so much, like when the tutor makes us watch a film (which I have invariably seen already). I understand why we do this, but it is frustrating to me because I want to be out there making my own films, not stuck in a classroom discussing how someone else did it. I'm not a fan of theory and academia - I want action! I'm all for innovation. Just because that is how everybody else has always done it, why do I have to do it like that? I like to subvert the rules and do things my own way if I think it is better. This is disconcerting to some people who like order and

predictability, but I think it creates possibilities. Things might not work out half the time, but then how can there be progress without change?

We have been given many opportunities to dabble in different genres. We've made our own documentaries, music videos, animations and dramas. I have had the good fortune to be allowed to start a film club at college where, as well as seeing cult classics, we can also preview our own films shown on a big screen. I love the fact that the dance studio where we hold the film club has tiered seating, so we get the chance to show our films in a cinema-like environment. I always think they look more epic on a giant screen as opposed to a regular computer.

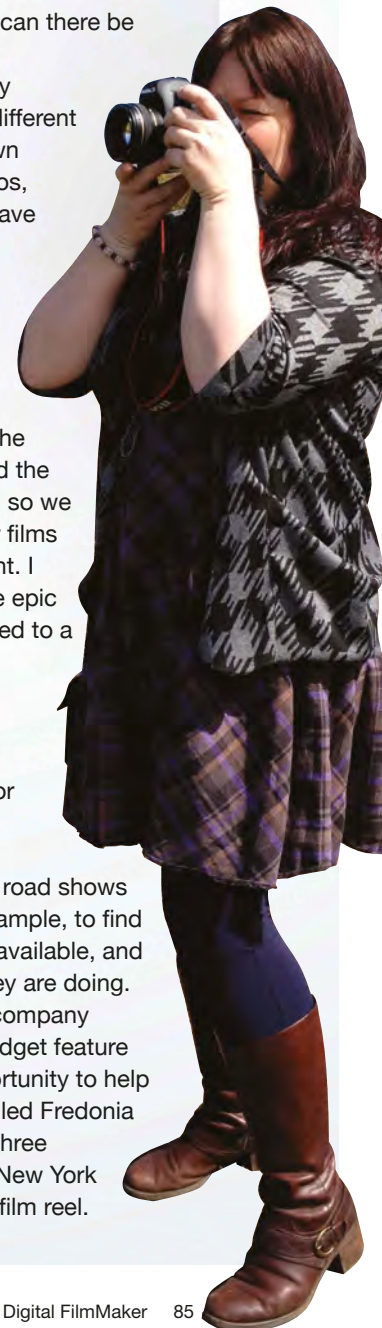
Always learning

Outside of college, I'm constantly on the lookout for opportunities to learn more about the business. I go to seminars, conferences and road shows by the BBC and BFI, for example, to find out what opportunities are available, and who is around and what they are doing.

A local indie production company was working on a micro-budget feature recently and I had the opportunity to help out with that. The film is called Fredonia and is a road movie about three Liverpool lads travelling to New York in search of a valuable lost film reel.



One of the bigger props Anna has worked with



A still from footage Anna has worked on



I was given the opportunity to design and create some costumes, assisted with auditioning and casting, and tracked down a left-hand drive Hummer with an enthusiastic owner who was happy to lend it to the film as the villain's car. I also somehow got roped in to acting on-screen as a female wrestler in a mass fight scene, which was hilarious to film. Thankfully I had a mask on the whole time so hopefully won't be identified by anybody who knows me. The Liverpool comedian Stan Boardman has a role in the film and he kept the cast and crew very well entertained between takes. I learnt a lot about the process by keeping a beady eye on what the director, producers and crew were doing.

One of my current projects is a short film that I have written and produced called Something New, which I plan to enter into the BFI London and Encounters Bristol film festivals. It is a coming of age drama

to be filmed on the Wirral coastline where there is beautiful scenery and wildlife for the DoP to get really creative with. There are two characters in this short. The first is played by a close friend of mine, who if I'm honest, I based the character around as I wrote the script (sorry Gill). The second was cast after I went to see an amateur production of a play called Creekside Manor, written by Wirral playwright Jay Podmore. George Fletcher played a leading character and, as I was watching him in the play, I was thinking he'd be perfect in my film. I contacted him through Jay and happily he very generously agreed

to appear in my short.

Later, I discovered that George already has quite a fanbase as he's a paralympic athlete in 7-a-side football team. He travels all over the world playing for England, so I am again amazed at how people are so generous with their time and talent when it comes to filmmaking. Expecting professionals to work for free is not something that I relish, and is the one thing that is driving me forward to create films that make some money. I want to make films to tell stories and entertain people and I would be happy to do that for nothing, and fortunately a lot of other



Anna also got roped in as a female wrestler in Fredonia

creative people also agree. Although making money is by no means my main aim in filmmaking, when I can make a film and pay cast and crew a fair remuneration for their contributions, I will be happy. As with all of the small films that I have produced so far I am astonished at the generosity and enthusiasm of the people who volunteer to get involved.

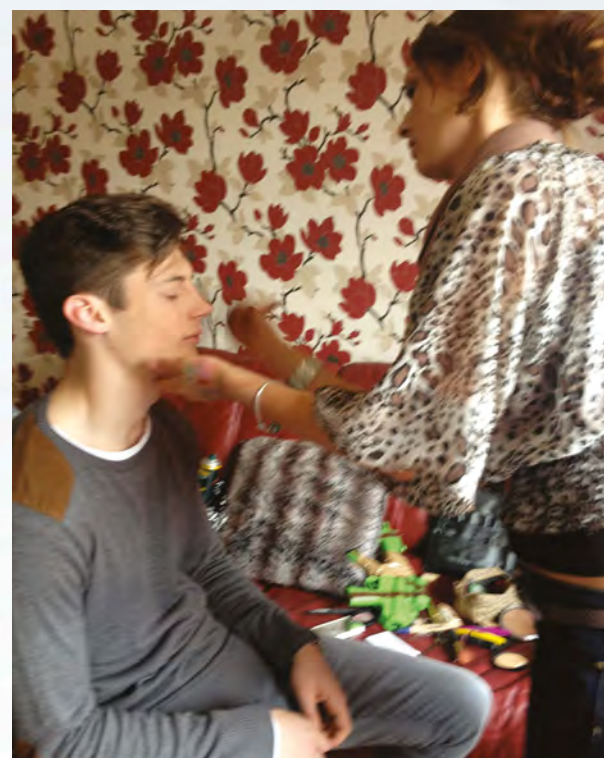
Endless talent

There is so much talent right on my doorstep. There's no need to go to Hollywood, or even London for actors, musicians and crew with such an incredible array of professionals, experience and talent here in the North West. I adore the way actors bring to life a script that has so far only existed in my own imagination. During read-throughs, the cast and crew discuss the characters and plot as though they were real and start to invent elaborate backstories, motivations, personality traits and possible futures for the made-up world and its inhabitants. I really get a buzz out of that.

Over the next 18 months, I plan to build up a portfolio of short films, animations and music videos to showcase my style and ability. I am entering film competitions

and festivals whenever possible, in the hope that something I make will spark the interest of potential funders. I have ideas for three possible feature-length films on the go right now and, before the end of my course, I plan to have focused on and developed one of these in to a definite proposal. Then, at the end of my course in July 2014, I will plunge headfirst into producing that first feature making that my full time occupation.

Funding, or rather lack of, is the main obstacle to my film making ambitions so far. I had to save up long and hard to buy myself a camera. For six months the family had to make do with supermarket budget brands, while I put the tenners I saved on grocery shopping into a piggy bank. Eventually I had enough to buy a second hand Canon 5D Mark II and one lens. I am delighted with this camera and the filmmaking possibilities it presents. Having my own camera has created a degree of freedom in what I can do and when. The family are also delighted that they can now have branded cereals again for breakfast. The next thing I want to invest in is some good sound recording equipment. I like making music videos and animations because I can get good quality



sound relatively easily from a studio. Something New is dialogue heavy and set on a beach, and as such the sound is proving to be the most difficult aspect to get right, but these challenges are all part of the learning curve. ■

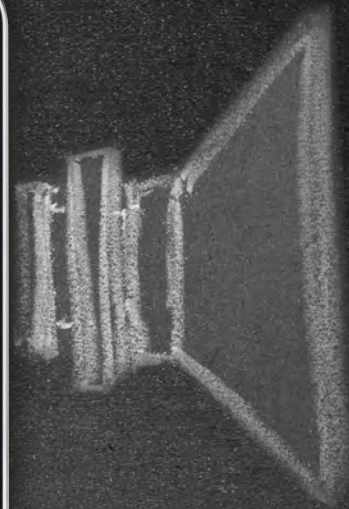
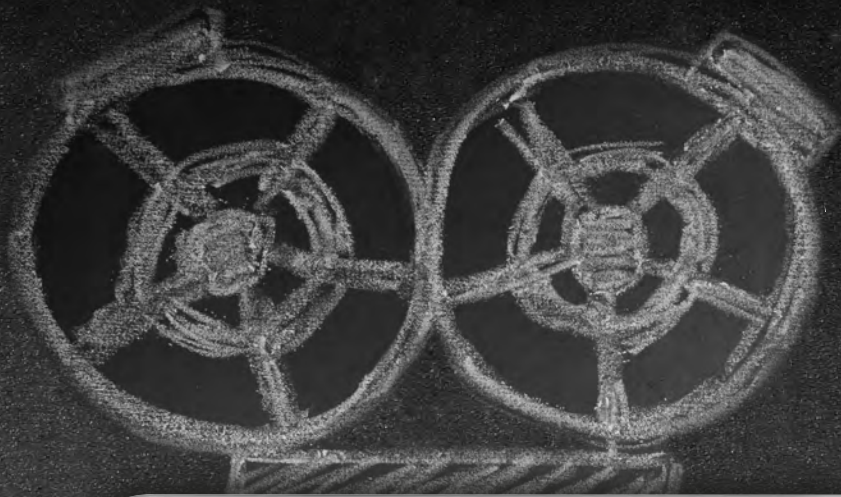
“ A GREAT FILM THESE DAYS CAN BE MADE FOR THOUSANDS OF POUNDS, RATHER THAN MILLIONS ”



Climbing the ladder

My ambitions are to build an independent film production company that is self-funding. My fledgling production company is called MightyLimey, and I now produce my films under that name. Technically, I am a student filmmaker, but in my mind I am already doing the job I want to do. I am creating original films in the role of writer, producer and director. What I hope for in the future is that an audience will think it is worth paying to see my films and I can start paying all of those brilliant and talented artists who have trusted me this far on this amazing journey.

My philosophy is that digital filmmaking has opened up the floodgates to a wealth of creative talent. A great film these days can be made for thousands of pounds, rather than millions and that puts power into the hands of ordinary people with drive and a story to tell. It has given more choice to audiences too. Filmmakers don't even have to rely on a few people judging our work worthy of distribution. If we want, we can put it out there ourselves for free and let it find its own audience. It's a whole new filmmaking process and I'm excited to be part of it.



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HARDWARE ADVICE

The DFM team offers up essential advice on getting started and takes a look at some of the best kit currently available for filmmaking

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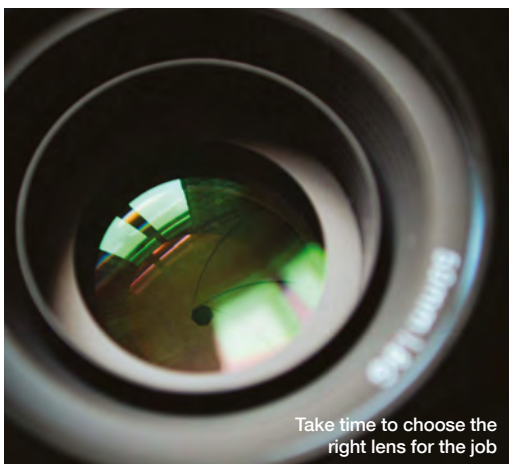
SHOOTING VIDEO WITH A DSLR **CHOOSING THE RIGHT KIT**

As a filmmaking beginner, it can be tricky to know what kit you need to shoot professional videos. So, before we look at the hardware, we'll give you an overview of what you'll need and hear how a professional videographer gets his job done

High-quality video production tools have become hugely accessible over recent years. With the development of technology, even the low-end kit can rival some of the professional equipment of years gone by. Although achieving a professional level of video production depends on a sizeable amount of skill and experience, having the resources to hand that allow you to test these skills requires an initial investment in crucial recording equipment.

Capturing HD video with a DSLR is relatively cheap compared to the high-quality video cameras of several years ago, and in the right hands they can even rival cinema-quality cameras. However, with the growing market and countless resources both on and offline, it can be difficult to decipher where your money can best be spent.

As with most areas of modern technology, cameras are forever changing. With new spec sheets and better features being developed all the time, they can become old news very rapidly. It is, therefore, very common for your DSLR to be the first item on your kit list to be replaced, whereas lenses and other accessories can last almost forever.



Take time to choose the right lens for the job

Lenses

Acquiring quality lenses is just as important as your camera choice, and many would argue even more so. High-end lenses will likely outlive most of the equipment and accessories in your arsenal, including your DSLR. Lenses are also relatively timeless, meaning that no matter how far technology progresses, they will always be able to produce top-quality video.

Most serious videographers will also argue that the best optics for shooting video are prime lenses. Prime lenses are those that do not zoom, but simply have one fixed focal length. Prime lenses also generally produce a cleaner, higher quality picture, as well as having the advantage of a fixed wide aperture. The 50mm prime lens, for example, is one of the most popular lens options available. It has a focal length that is thought of as a 'normal' lens, because it provides an image comparable to



Crisp and clear audio is just as important as picture quality

that of the human eye. All of the manufacturers offer a 50mm prime lens, which, although it equates to more than the stated 50mm length on crop sensor cameras, provides a great place to start your new filming journey.

However, depending on the subjects you're trying to shoot, a zoom lens may well be your perfect companion. There is a huge selection out there to choose from, with some being more suited to shooting video than others, and all coming in at varying qualities and price points. Typically, zoom lenses don't have the benefits of a fast aperture, and most of the beginner level lenses have a variable aperture throughout the zoom range. However, a zoom lens with a large selection of focal lengths will allow you to play with the field of view and give you all the flexibility over composition that a prime optic simply can't.

Audio

The sound of your video is arguably as important as the footage you're capturing. Unfortunately, the built-in microphone within DSLRs should only really be reserved for emergencies. Luckily, there is an extensive range of alternatives for capturing high-quality audio.

For the videographer recording on the move, a simple external microphone plugged into your DSLR is a great option. Even the most basic of external microphones will be better equipped to remove unwanted background noise and capture crisp and clear sound more effectively from your subject.

For those who have more control over where their audio is coming from, potentially where the events being filmed have been pre-determined or scripted, using an external

audio recording device is a popular method to call upon. The recorder can be placed anywhere away from your camera, and the separate audio file can then be synced with the video footage in post-processing.

Stability

Second to audio and video quality for those serious about capturing the best possible video is stability. A smooth and seamless video can be the difference between a professional looking movie and an amateur clip.

There's a huge selection of stability options out there designed to meet the needs of every videographer, whether you're going for a dynamic shot, remaining static, or chasing your subject across a wide open scene.

You'll also find endless accessories that can be attached to your kit list too, from extra lenses to lighting kits and advanced camera rigs. Although most of these aren't necessary items to get you started on your videography journey, they'll soon become everyday items that play a part in adding professional production value to your movies. ■



DSLR shoulder rigs are a popular budget option for stability

Interview with a Pro



Russell Owen is a filmmaker who has only recently switched to digital for financial purposes after years of being a film snob and he's absolutely loving it...



What's your latest project all about?

My latest project is a surreal thriller, *Welcome To The Majority* set in purgatory, about several people discovering that they're dead and trying to figure a way out of their situation. It was a pretty art house film, which has only just hit the festival circuit, but it's already picking up numerous awards and gaining quite a following. It was filmed on location in the Snowdonia National Park and in London.

WHAT OTHER PROJECTS ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

At the moment I'm working on the screenplay for *The Somnus Track*, the directorial debut of Chris Reading who has also written the story. It follows a book holding the secret to the fate of man through time. When the world ends, only a small colony of people have survived having built a protective dome on an asteroid called Somnus. But other humans have also survived, stuck in space in a container ship that eerily auto-guides them to the colony.

We heard you recently switched from film to digital. Can you tell us how that's changed things?

I was always a film snob, having always worked on bigger budget films shot on 35mm and never liking the look or feel of digital at that time. I shot my first film, a short called *Anglesey Road* on Kodak super 35mm with a great, full Panavision kit and the end result was fantastic. It was extremely expensive however, and it was taking quite some time to raise the basic funds for a feature. It was when I was production managing a film, *The Guardian Angel*, with an all-star cast that we began doing tests on the new Canon models (this was a few years ago now!) and I was blown away at how fantastic the resulting images looked. We then settled on RED and I think that won the argument for me. Although the film wasn't shot in the way I would have shot it the image, detail and most importantly the 'feel' (especially after a basic grade) sold me on digital. So much so that everything I've shot since has either been using the RED, DSLRs or Sony equipment. I've recently shot a music video, *Kiss In The Snow*, which is up on YouTube and we used a Nikon. The end result is beautiful. Also the ease, even with

RED these days, in getting the data straight into edit without the time and expense of development. Digitising has saved a fortune and definitely changed the game.

You mentioned that you used a selection of digital cameras in the past. What cameras do you typically use in your current projects?

I love using the Canon 7D (I'm a director not a DoP!) and, as a director, it's easy for me to use and I can plan shots and really show the DoP what I'm after. Then he/she will move in to do the shot justice, usually with a RED or something that holds a bit more info! I'm perfectly happy shooting 1080p, but shooting 4K on RED has huge benefits. Chris Reading and his DoP are currently using the RED Scarlet shooting jelly fish at the Sea Life Centre, along with various paints and physical effects, all to be combined in post to create surreal deep space scenes. The great thing about shooting 4K is the freedom it's given him doing these effects to really zoom in and manipulate the image without losing the quality, something that wouldn't be possible with a 7D! I have also used an Arri Phantom HD Gold for super slow-mo on a shoot and I'm desperate to use it again, it's a fantastic bit of kit.

Is there one piece of kit you simply couldn't be without?

It sounds sad, but the one piece of kit as a director I couldn't do without is my little 35mm viewfinder my producer bought me from Panavision. Having previously been a storyboard and concept artist it's a huge help, making all the difference to a location when I'm framing up. I first used it on 1066 (a Channel 4, two-part drama) directed by Justin Hardy. I was storyboarding and we were out on location looking around and the viewfinder simply helped me block out anything distracting, like telephone wires and roads at the edge of shot, that brought



Using more portable kit means tricky locations are now accessible

the whole location straight into the 21st century whilst I was trying to envision Viking battles in Yorkshire!

So is there one piece of kit you really want to add to your filmmaking arsenal?

My dream bit of kit would certainly be (greedily) an Arri Alexa and an Arri Phantom. The Phantom because I think it's incredible and the Alexa simply because I've not shot on it before now. The imagery and reports I've read for both have been fantastic. Oh, and my own set of anamorphic lenses...but again, being a director I would simply hand them to my DoP every time! I've developed a great relationship with Panavision over the years and love collecting the lenses above anything else, just because they're really the eyes that make the vision and give it that feel.

SO ARE YOU AT HOME WITH A LARGER SET-UP, OR ARE YOU PERFECTLY HAPPY SHOOTING WITH BASIC, MINIMAL KIT?

I'm as much at home with a gigantic set-up and kit as I am with a small amount of kit and a skeleton crew. Having trained in production on films that cost upwards of £15 million with huge equipment set-ups, it soon became apparent that all that matters is what they're capturing. If the image is good, the performance is good, the script is good, nothing else matters really. It's simply a great bonus if it can look good too and I've learned that, increasingly, you need less and less kit to achieve a great image as technology evolves over time.

So you'd be perfectly happy tackling a low-budget project with basic kit, if the concept and development holds up?

Yes definitely. One thing I started doing when I was doing camera tests was writing short 1-3 minute pieces and experimenting. You soon find out that it really all does come down to story and performance in the end. That is one of the key problems with big Hollywood films that flop. They often have amazing talent behind camera and in post-production, but without the right script and cast, the film just doesn't connect and it renders all the hard work of the DoP, production designers, costumes, editors, musicians and all the rest of it, useless. There's a saying; you can't polish a turd! And it's never truer than in movies. If you start with a weak or average script, no matter how great the talent is crew-wise, director-wise and so on, it will still be an

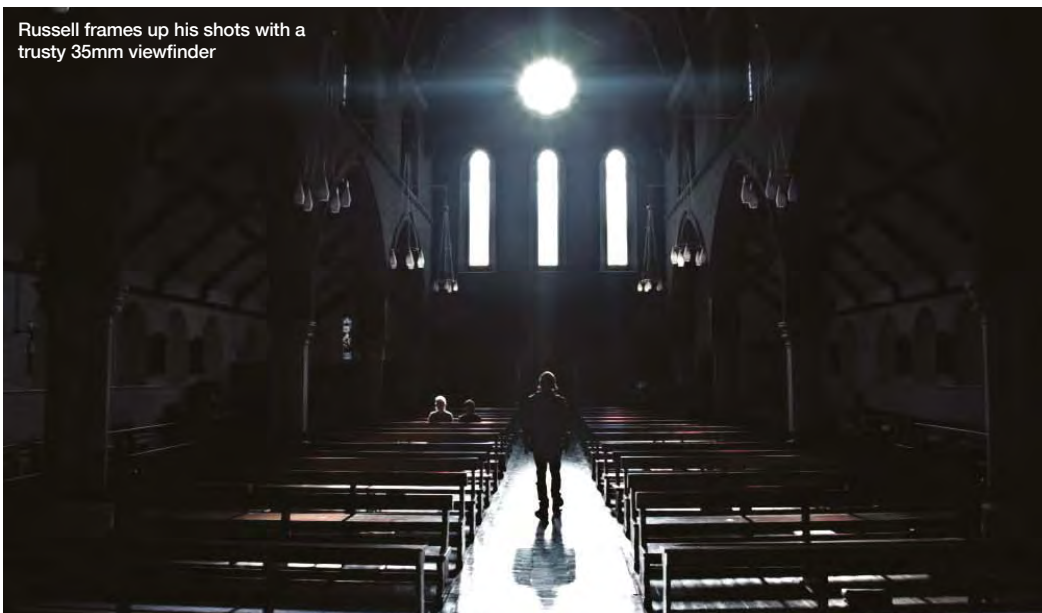
average film. The same goes for performance. Doesn't matter how beautifully you light and shoot an actor, dress them and cake them in make-up. If they don't connect with the character on the page and enthusiastically portray it, it just won't connect with an audience. They soon lose interest in everything else on screen if those two key elements aren't engaging them.

DO YOU ALWAYS SHOOT WITH A COMPLETE TEAM BEHIND YOU COVERING THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE FILMING PROCESS?

I always shoot with a team, whether small or large. I think it's key to have someone on hand who's a pro in their area, particularly with sound and lighting. I appreciate a good image and it's awful when sound is an afterthought (and obvious in some films sometimes). Both are really important to me and I've been lucky enough to have built up a team I can really trust to deliver the best job in all departments. I enjoy learning how everything works, but when I'm directing something, particularly narrative with actors, I tend to get distracted easily by all the buttons! So it's best I focus on that one job.

Do you think there is, or has, been a single piece of kit that has been a major game changer for videographers?

For videographers or even filmmakers in general, the Canon 5D and 7D have completely changed the game by opening the door to a whole new batch of talent with affordable imagery that looks great and a diminishing cost in post-production. Canon models might



Russell frames up his shots with a trusty 35mm viewfinder



Good kit is one thing but you still need a great script

CULLUM MARY AVRIL LEE OLEGAR MERYL PHILIP KEATON KATY FRANCIS
AUSTIN BENN BRADY CHENEY FEDORO GRIFFITHS HURD-WOOD MAKKI WITHERS WOOLF

EVERYTHING STARTS WITH AN ENDING

WELCOME TO THE MAJORITY

a RUSSELL OWEN film



Do you ever see yourself going back to traditional film?

I'd like to go back to film someday if it feels like the right thing to do, but all the projects I have in mind at the moment can be shot perfectly comfortably on digital. I think if I genuinely want a 'film effect' and I have the budget I'd rather shoot on film then, simply because, no matter how good the grade is, I'd feel like a fraud going for a grainy film effect but not shooting on film! I know that sounds weird, but sometimes there is a magic to film because of its practicality, the chemical process, developing and so on. It makes you (as a director) approach it differently and therefore approach your project differently (depending on what sort of director you are that is...) and it affects the overall outcome in the end.

Paul Thomas Anderson recently shot the Master on 70mm. It's fantastic high-res, but doesn't do much more than digital these days for the image. Asked why he simply replied

not have been the pioneering in that field but they've certainly claimed the benchmark and given filmmakers more opportunity to prove themselves and even practice without the costs. I think it opens the door to a flood of new talent that found it difficult to find an opportunity to prove themselves before, so it's a pretty exciting time. I think eventually it will up the game for Hollywood and give studios a wider selection of talent to pick from.

SOMINUS TRACK: TECHNICAL DETAILS

With The Somnus Track, we've been shooting on RED Scarlet at 4K, 24fps for practical special effects, utilising the crop factor at 2K to double the focal length, bumping the 100mm macro to 200mm macro to create a more convincing final image. For shooting space Nebulae and planets in macro we used the Arri pocket par 200 extremely close to our subject to allow us to shoot F32. This gave us a maximum depth-of-field and a more realistic sense of space. The company supporting the project and supplying equipment is VMI, supplying Zeiss CP.2 Primes and assorted grip equipment such as Kessler, Cineslider and so on. I'm currently about to do a camera test using RED Epic for my next feature as writer/director, which is called Mountain Clouds. It's a bigger budget project with some big stars! If it all goes to plan we'll be shooting early in 2014 in Scotland and at 3 Mills Studios in London



Digital technology has transformed filmmaking

'because I know that I shot it on 70mm and I've always wanted to shoot a movie on 70mm'. Increasingly, the generation that was brought up shooting on film will fade away, but I really see his point. At one point it would've been an absolute dream to shoot on 70mm, whereas now it's not as relevant to the final image. I've always wanted to shoot on IMAX, but digital looks like it has that base covered and the post process on IMAX is crazy! Whereas it's pretty much the same easy process digitally, which is great. ■

Websites

www.castlevalleyfilms.com
www.facebook.com/welcometothemajority
www.facebook.com/thesomnustrack

PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-G6

As a replacement to the G5, the latest model in the popular Panasonic line-up is even better than its predecessor

The Panasonic G series has long been recognised as delivering some of the best performing models in the compact system camera market. And, it's easy to see why there's such a growing band of followers out there, thanks to a popular Micro Four Thirds lens mount, countless lenses and accessories, a small form factor



and, naturally for anyone into filmmaking, high-quality video functionality.

The nicely styled and well put together DMC-G6 is the latest in the line of G cameras and pumps out full HD 1920x1080 60p, as well as supporting native 1080/24p. It has a built-in stereo microphone and can record in Dolby Digital sound. However, there is also a 3.5mm jack input for an external microphone, which is always a bonus. Round the back of the G6 is a 3-inch LCD screen with a super-high resolution of 1,036k dots, which also rotates 180° to the side and tilts 270° up and down

Meanwhile, a highlight feature of the G6 is the built-in Wi-Fi connectivity. It isn't a new feature as such, but its usefulness is really self-evident when you're able to connect to mobile devices for live previews, control the various settings and transfer photo and video files wirelessly to an external device. It's a doddle to use too.

VERDICT

A small form factor, touchscreen controls



and that hugely practical rotating LCD for easy viewing at any angle all go a long way to presenting the G6 as a very usable tool. The G6 doesn't really put a foot wrong. It comes with all of the features it needs to be a great videography tool and, coupled with the right lenses and accessories, produces fantastic videos with ease.

Price £549

Web www.panasonic.co.uk

SAMSUNG NX300

The recently unveiled flagship model from the NX range comes packed with exciting new technology

The Samsung NX series has always been a range to watch. Each new model invariably comes stuffed full of the latest technology and innovation to push the boundaries of what compact system cameras can do. The NX300 is the latest addition to the line-up, and blends retro looks with some hidden gems.



It comes with a 20.3-megapixel CMOS sensor, which is capable of capturing a huge amount of colour and detail. To review your photos and videos, there's a 3.3-inch AMOLED screen, which provides extremely high-quality playback. It also features built-in Wi-Fi connectivity that allows you to connect the camera to a number of external devices. In addition, the NX300 can shoot full HD 1080p at either 50p or 25p, and has built in microphones to record stereo sound. Features including an HDMI port, the ability to record in any of the creative modes and an interesting cinematic mode, which records at 1920x810 pixels at 24fps add extra value too.

However, one of the most impressive innovations on offer with this package is that the NX300 can shoot in 3D. It's the first one-lens system able to do this, and underlines that Samsung is never short of being able to make technological



advancements with its cameras.

VERDICT

The NX300 is currently the flagship model in this impressive range, featuring a metal construction and an APS-C sized sensor, along with a host of very impressive video functions that will be instantly appealing to any serious videographer. Its beefy feature set shows that it could be a serious contender in the CSC video race, and is certainly the best NX series camera to date. However the lens choice is still limited when compared with many MFT competitors.

Price £599/\$750

Web www.samsung.co.uk

ZYLIGHT ULTRA-THIN F8 LED FRESNEL

An awesome new light source that combines power and portability to produce an impressive all-round package

Effective lighting is very important for all manner of videography applications, and having lights that are not only effective in their role, but make your life easier as a videographer, will in turn push your filmmaking efforts to the next level. Zylight was founded around 10 years ago, with the single mission of bringing truly intelligent, timesaving lighting to the production industry. And so far, so good.

The latest bit of kit from Zylight is this new F8 LED Fresnel light, which is a compact offering that is designed to collapse to less than four-inches thick. This makes it ideal for storage and transportation, and also makes it more convenient to take on location. What's more, it still boasts the performance of traditional Fresnel lighting but in a more portable and energy efficient package. The F8 comes equipped with an eight-inch SCHOTT glass lens, meaning it maintains single shadow traditional beam shaping, with a spread that can be adjusted

between 16 and 70 degrees for even light coverage in widescreen productions.

The F8 is also a very versatile piece of kit with a number of possible uses. It has a silent operation that makes it ideal for use in the studio. However, it is also water resistant, which, coupled with its portability, makes it ideal for use on location.

VERDICT

The F8 is truly a flexible piece of kit, being a silent, fully-dimmable Fresnel light that is at home in the studio or out on challenging location shoots. It comes available in both 3200K and 5600K colour temperature versions, and also includes practical barn doors and a yoke mount. That said, the biggest downfall of the F8 is that the price point will push it out of reach of all but those who truly need it.

Price \$2,400

Web www.zylight.com



CAMERA QUADRIC

A simple camera rig that transforms itself to present four different ways of carrying and stabilising your camera set-up

There are lots of different styles of carrying and stabilising devices on the market, all aimed at carrying your set-up in different ways and offering varying levels of support. The Quadrig, however, looks to cover a range of bases when it comes to carrying options, offering an effective way of holding your kit no matter what your style, and presenting you with a selection of stabilising scenarios.

It only takes a few simple movements to completely change the structure of the Quadrig. And, as its name suggests, it can take on four different shapes. These include a shoulder rig, which gives you great balance and stability for heavier set-ups, a hand rig, which is ideal for smaller cameras and those times when you need

to shoot from a lower angle, a gun rig, which provides a strong base for stabilisation and a steadicam style configuration, which counters the weight of your kit for a smoother picture.

Constructed from metal, the Quadrig is very strong, and there's a simple tripod-style quick-release plate mounted on top that allows for almost any camera to be mounted to the system. It is also designed so that no tools are needed to alter its form, which further adds to its portability.

VERDICT

Adjusting the configuration of the Quadrig is as simple as loosening the various tightening nuts and transforming it to your desired set-up. It can also be taken apart to aid with storage and transportation. Having a single unit that can be used with varying styles and sizes of kit, as well as be adjusted to your favourite and most



effective position, is not only cost-effective but also very useful when you are forever changing your camera set-up.

Price \$999

Web camevra.com

FOTODIOX PRO DY-200 FRESNEL LED LIGHT

The new DY-200 is a cool running lightweight unit with an easy to adjust light beam



Fotodiox has always produced a range of simple panel lights and LEDs in all kinds of sizes. But, now they have introduced their new high-intensity LED Fresnel light. It comes in three different power outputs, 100, 200 and 300 watt, as well as being available in either daylight or tungsten editions.

The lights come equipped with built-in collapsible barn doors, as well as small gel clips for attaching coloured filters. The lights are free from flicker and offer a cool-to-touch operation, meaning the unit won't get hot after prolonged use. Inside the unit you'll find the motor that drives the LED back and forth, allowing you to adjust for a narrow or wide beam.

To manipulate this you can use the two controls on the back of the unit, by using a DMX-compatible lighting control system, or alternatively, by calling on the wireless remote control, which is particularly useful if the light is out of reach.

VERDICT

Until now, photographers and videographers have had to work with hot lights, which draw a lot of power and can become very uncomfortable to use. However, the latest innovations in LED lighting allows for quality illumination without these drawbacks. The DY-200 from Fotodiox, although on the pricey side, offers a simple to use, lightweight system with a fully adjustable LED light spread.

Price \$1199.95

Web www.fotodioxpro.com

EPHOTO TOP HANDLE CAMERA CAGE

A simple-but-effective carrying solution for your Blackmagic Cinema Camera

The Blackmagic Cinema Camera is a relatively large unit, especially when coupled with a lens and other accessories, and although it can be attached to a number of different rigs and set-ups, ePhoto decided to develop a design aimed straight at those who are taking on this new camera.

The Top Handle Camera Cage is a simple product that provides the Blackmagic Cinema Camera with a robust carrying handle, whether it is used for low-angle shooting or as a sturdy grip for transportation and when manoeuvring. The cage fits around the camera, providing a stable base and a confidence-inspiring structure. Attached to the base are two universal 15mm support rods, designed

to allow you to couple the Top Handle Cage with various accessories, such as a follow focus or matte box. The handle itself can be adjusted to face either towards or away from your body, depending on your preferred method of carrying. The structure is an all-metal construction to make it heavy-duty enough to take excessive weight along with a few bumps and scrapes during everyday use.

VERDICT

The Top Handle Camera Cage is a very simple product, and it performs its tasks with little fuss. It is quite a niche product, offering a basic carrying solution for one specific camera. However, for those using a Blackmagic Cinema Camera it is a very effective and simple bit of kit. It allows for easy transportation of your camera, as well as the ability to add on some accessories too. With only a basic construction it

is also very easy to take apart or make adjustments when you need to.

Price \$399.99

Web www.ephotoinc.com



TASCAM DR-60D

A production-focused 4-channel audio recorder that's ideal for use with DSLR cameras

DSLR cameras have long been known for the excellent video quality they are able to produce. However, at the same time, the built-in audio has always been an issue, often falling short of what is needed for most that use it. The Tascam DR-60D is a new 4-channel recorder aimed directly at DSLR users. It can record high-quality audio files, from MP3 all the way to 96k 24bit sound, and has a variety of recording modes from mono to 4-track.

It also has various inputs, including two XLR/TRS options, a 1/8th inch stereo jack, a camera-in port for monitoring, as well as a camera-out with individual level controls. There are outputs, including a line-out and headphone jack, also with individual level controls for quick and easy adjustment. Its form factor is in the style of a control box,



and is therefore aimed at production set-ups. On the base of the unit is a tripod mount, and on the top is a screw mount for attaching a camera. In that respect the design enables it to sit between your tripod and camera, providing an easy to reach location for adjusting your audio settings, making it ideal for solo shooters.

VERDICT

The DR-60D is aimed at those wanting full control over their audio recording. It has a

variety of controls that are all designed to make it quick and simple to adjust settings on the go, with a backlit LCD display to easily monitor settings as you record. There are some minor issues, such as the individual level adjustments going up in noticeable digital increments, making it difficult to adjust while recording, but overall it's a hugely versatile package for the price.

Price £299.99/\$349.99

Web www.tascam.com

PENTAX K50

Pentax has released its new mid-range DSLR, aimed at those who like to be just a little bit different

The K-50 is one of the latest DSLR cameras from Pentax. It has a total of 81 weather seals that make the body dust and freeze-proof. That in turn makes it ideal for shooting on location in less than ideal conditions. The main body is constructed

using stainless steel, making it an hugely reassuring package that promises durability. The K-50 is also available in 120 crazy colour combinations, for those who like to be unique or stand out from the crowd.

Meanwhile, packed inside the eye-catching K-50 is an impressive 16-megapixel APS-C sized sensor, offering built-in Shake Reduction, which will help when hand holding the camera, along with a maximum ISO setting of 51,200, which will be ideal in low light situations. As well as this, the K-50 can record movies in full HD resolution with a choice of frame rates, including 20, 25 and 24 frames per second. An additional plus point of the K-50 is the option to use AA batteries in the camera via a small adapter. This is ideal for situations where you don't have your charger, or run out of juice unexpectedly. The only downside is that it could probably prove costly if you're planning on using the feature on a more frequent basis.



VERDICT

Pentax has never quite been at the top of the league when it comes to shooting video. However, with a number of key features on offer here, all that could change. The addition of weather sealing is a huge bonus at this price point, and integrated Shake Reduction technology is more important to videographers than anyone else.

Price: £529.99/\$699.95

Website: www.pentax.co.uk



REDROCK MICRO ONE MAN CREW MOTORIZED SLIDER

A practical motorised curved slider that does pretty much all of the hard work for you

Having to operate a camera slider will invariably prevent you from doing much else while you're filming, and for solo shooters this can often be a bit of a problem. However, Redrock Micro has a solution, and it's the One Man Crew Motorized Slider.



This is essentially a powered device that drives your camera on a precision curved track at a speed of your choice, all while keeping a stationary subject in the frame. It can help when you're working the main camera, and you have a B-cam on the slider, getting you great dynamic shots while you capture the important stuff. However, it's also extremely useful for getting the main footage you need without having to worry about keeping yourself steady. Simply set up the slider, dial in your speed and let the One Man Crew do the rest. The unit itself is also very portable, with a simple carry handle on one side. It also offers a number of different motion speeds, a steady consistent movement and completely silent operation, which is obviously very important.

VERDICT

The One Man Crew Motorized Slider from Redrock Micro

is an excellent product, offering a huge number of uses and benefits for a wide range of videographers. It has some fantastic features, including laser-guided accuracy and can keep the camera smooth while changing direction. Its simplicity is perhaps its best asset, allowing you to focus on other things, while you let it do the tricky stuff. That alone is probably likely to make it appealing to many.

Price \$1495

Web www.redrockmicro.com



DJI PHANTOM QUADCOPTER

An innovative quadcopter designed to offer impressive aerial videos using a GoPro

Aerial recording is a niche subject, and one that many videographers will perhaps never explore. However, for those that do like to use it, or for those who are interested in adding an extra

perspective to their movies, there are a number of different devices to consider. Many will simply use a long jib boom to get the desired effect of capturing a scene. However, a motorised flying device will give you the most scope for getting above your scene and really control what you capture from up on high.

The Phantom Quadcopter from DJI

is a motorised helicopter-style flying device that has been designed for use with the popular GoPro camera range. It sports a very simple remote-control unit that is responsive at up to 300 metres away. However, there is also an impressive built-in Naza-M autopilot system

with a fail-safe function. This means that when the communication between the control unit and the Phantom is lost, the outputs of all command sticks from the controller will go to the centre position. As well as that, if the GPS signal is good enough, the system will automatically trigger the Return to Home function, and it will land itself safely.

VERDICT

The Phantom Quadcopter has some very impressive features, and lots of simple innovations that make it ideal for those just taking a dip into aerial videography. It's a small, light unit where the propellers can be removed for easy transportation, plus it's also possible to remove the GoPro mount and attach a similar sized camera. However, it's unlikely to be able to take much more weight and effectively fly at its top speed of 10m/s on its frugal 15-minute battery life.

Price: £499

Website: www.dji-innovations.com



ROLLEI MINI CRANE M1

This nifty mini crane offers a carbon-fibre body and a system that is wonderfully simple to use

Rollei has been making camera accessories for a good while now, and has recently released a number of new products including this, the Mini Crane M1. It is essentially a compact, lightweight and easy to set up crane for your camera. In use, the Mini Crane has a large working radius and can be adjusted quickly using the various simple twist grips. Designed to be used with counter-weights, the Mini Crane clamps down on the loaded weights, and provides a scale on the counter-balance rod, ensuring that you tighten it in the correct location.

It's constructed using strong and lightweight carbon-fibre sections, connected using a number of quick-release tightening twist grips. The various metal components are made of stainless

steel and are anodized in black for a simple but undeniably high-quality finish. It packs down very small too, and is 2 metres long when fully extended. The Mini Crane itself weighs just 1.5Kg, but can handle a maximum weight of up to 5Kg, making it ideal for most set-ups.

VERDICT

As is the case with most cranes, the Mini Crane is designed to sit on top of a tripod. Luckily, due to its compact size and easy construction, that doesn't then add much more to your kit bag allowance. The carbon-fibre construction, coupled with stainless steel, ensures the elements won't do much to harm the crane, while also giving it a quality look and feel. Small additions such as the quick-release plate and the built-in spirit level make this an all round great crane. No confirmed price at the time of writing so see their website.

Price TBA

Web www.rcp-technik.com



APHEX DRONE

The Aphex drone is a funky remote hexacopter designed to take your camera into the skies with ease

The Aphex Hexacopter has been designed for aerial photography and, more specifically, rather complex orthophotography purposes. However, its uses aren't simply limited to this, because if it can support a camera, it can help with recording video. A great feature of the Event 38 product range is that they are used in conjunction with their Mission Control

software, and using built-in GPS it gives you real-time flight data and allows you to control the device from your laptop. The Aphex has been designed to hold point-and-shoot models or small CSC cameras. It was originally designed for the Samsung NX range of mirrorless shooters, and comes with a remote shutter for these model variants.

Weighing in at 1.6Kg, the Aphex can hold a camera weighing up to 400grams. With this weight it can achieve a flight time of just under 10 minutes before the low-level



battery warning will let you know it's time to bring it back down.

VERDICT

The Aphex drone from Event 38 is undoubtedly a specialist item of equipment, providing over and above what the average aerial videographer could need on a shoot. Its price point will also put it out of reach for a lot of people. Nevertheless, its ability to get a shot that is otherwise impossible, while also mapping the route it has taken through the GPS system, is very impressive.

Price: \$1589.99

Website: www.event38.com



ECLIPSE VARIABLE ND FILTERS

Take back control of your vital camera settings with the help of a variable ND filter

The light coming into your camera lens invariably dictates the settings you will need to use to achieve the correct exposure. This may not be a problem when you have control of the light, but when you're on location and shooting in natural light, it can be difficult. Too much light can play havoc with your shutter speeds and aperture, and leave you feeling out of control. This is where neutral density filters can help you take back control of your settings. ND filters allow you to essentially block the light from hitting the sensor, fooling the camera into thinking the scene is actually much darker than it is, which in turn allows you to use a wider aperture.

These variable ND filters from Eclipse provide a range of ND filter grades in one package, allowing you to adjust how strong the filter is, and thus how much light it is stopping from entering the lens.



What that means is that you can use it how you please, in a number of lighting situations and in a whole variety of creative ways. Granted, these aren't exactly bargain-basement options, but they can soon be earning their keep by allowing you to keep on shooting, rather than struggling with your settings.

VERDICT

Something that draws videographers to cameras with larger sensors, such as DSLRs, is their ability to produce an extremely shallow depth-of-field. These variable ND filters allow you to utilise this in any light. If you use a number of different lenses, Eclipse also offers a range of step up/down rings, which enable you to bridge the gap between different filter sizes. That makes it possible to use a single filter, saving money and reducing the size of your kit.

Price £174.90/\$109 (77mm)

Web www.genustech.tv

KONOVA SKATE DOLLY

The Konova Skate Dolly is a simple but fully adjustable device designed to introduce smooth and seamless motion into your videos

Moving a camera while recording is just one of the many challenging issues faced by videographers. Keeping a shot steady and at the angle or level you need can be difficult without the right piece of kit. While many will decide to handhold using various rigs in an attempt to get the footage they want, sometimes it just isn't possible. This is where a dolly can come in really useful.

The Konova Skate Dolly is a nifty camera mount attached to four wheels. It allows you to place your set up on the dolly and use the straightforward design to move around the scene in a smooth and controlled manner. The movement of the dolly can be utilised in a number of ways, from zooming to panning, and the simplicity of the Konova make it a breeze to use. We also like the

way the position of the wheels can be easily adjusted to suit specific angles, enabling the dolly to turn corners while shooting. What's more, the aluminium rods are very durable too. Konova believes the Skate Dolly will take up to 60Kg of weight, which is enough for any size kit, and with the addition of a simple video head it's a very versatile piece of kit.

VERDICT

Dollies are specialist items that usually present only a few different shooting options, and could therefore be seen as unnecessary luxuries when they are going to remain in your kit bag most of the time. However, for this low price point, and with some very simple and appealing

features, the Konova Skate Dolly presents an attractive package for anyone looking to add smooth and fluid movements to their footage. It should also stand the test of time judging by the overall build quality on offer.

Price £99/\$90

Web www.konovaphoto.com



THINK TANK AIRPORT SECURITY V2.0

Improving upon the original Airport Security bag, version two has an impressive feature set for anyone travelling with their gear

Having somewhere safe and secure to store your kit is very important, and no more so than when you're travelling a lot. The Airport Security V2.0 from Think Tank is a rolling luggage case designed specifically as a carry-on bag that will protect your prized equipment. It's the largest carry-on roller bag that meets most flight standards, and offers ample height and depth for you to store your various items. The interior of the bag is completely customisable using the various padded inserts, enabling you to adjust the layout to suit your needs.

The benefits of the Airport Security bag become apparent when you look to the exterior. It has a TSA-approved combination

zipper lock for the main compartment and a strong cable and TSA-approved padlock to secure the entire bag to a fixed object, which can be really handy if you ever



have to leave your bag out of sight while shooting. The exterior of the bag is made of a semi-hard shell to aid in reinforcing the structure, as well as having a water-resistant coating to help if you're caught out in the elements.

VERDICT

Think Tank has always produced impressive solutions for carrying photo and video equipment, and it's easy to see why the Airport Security range is popular. The V2.0 carry-on bag offers maximum protection for your gear, both from bumps and scrapes as well as potential thieves, while making the process of transporting and storing equipment flexible to your own liking. The icing on the cake, meanwhile, is that it adheres to the set regulations that allow you to use this as carry-on luggage for air travel.

Price £280/\$394.75

Web www.thinktankphoto.com

KAMERAR FF-3 FOLLOW FOCUS

A cheap and simple follow focus that looks to be punching way above its weight



Being able to accurately and smoothly focus your lenses is an important skill to master with high-end filming. And, although there are those who simply use the focus ring on their chosen optic, a dedicated follow focus is typically the best tool for the job. The Kamerar FF-3 Follow Focus mounts to your set-up with just a single 15mm quick release clamp. This makes it very easy to attach, but also very quick to remove and adjust when it comes to changing lenses and gear positions. In addition, it comes with a removable magnetic dry erase marking disc, and is compatible with the industry standard 15mm rods, as well as industry standard Follow Focus Whips or Cranks. All that means it's simple to integrate the FF-3 into your arsenal.

A key feature of the FF-3 is that the entire arrangement is removable from the left of the lens, allowing it to be mounted in order to be used on

the right-hand side. This means that you're subsequently able to focus with your right hand, which could be very useful depending on the kind of set-up being employed.

VERDICT

Considering its respectable price point, the FF-3 from Kamerar is an excellent looking piece of kit. It has a mostly metal construction, so should be solid enough to take some abuse during the everyday filming scenarios it's likely to face. What's more, with industry standard compatibility in most areas, it'll be easy to upgrade and maintain this follow focus. Admittedly, this isn't the smallest or best-designed follow focus on the market, but it is ideal for anyone looking for precise focus control on a shoestring budget.

Price: £115.99

Website: www.kamerar.com

REDROCK MICRO COBALT CAGE FOR GOPRO CAMERAS

Make your GoPro invincible with the tough Cobalt Cage from Redrock Micro

Redrock Micro has recently introduced their new protective cage for GoPro Hero cameras. It's cleverly designed to give you the confidence to take your GoPro almost anywhere. The cage is reinforced and made from military-grade aluminium, making it impact-proof, crash-proof, crush-proof and bulletproof. It can be mounted on the GoPro with the original case as well for extra protection, or simply with the camera by itself. And, with it attached, there's still easy access to all of the ports and functions, as well as extra room for any additional accessories you might be using.

As well as adding some serious protection to your GoPro Hero, which is obviously a sizeable investment, the Cobalt cage offers a huge number of mounting points thanks to four sides of



industry standard 1/4" taps. This means you can mount the GoPro directly to other video gear, onto a video head, or even using a suction-cup mount. The various attachment points also allow for accessories to be bolted to your GoPro

set-up, such as an external light or microphone. So it's hugely practical.

VERDICT

GoPro cameras are a very popular choice for attaching to moving subjects for shooting sporting events and suchlike. So for those wanting to attach a relatively inexpensive camera in a potentially dangerous position, and all the while achieving some fantastic footage, this gizmo makes a lot of sense. The Redrock Cobalt cage simply helps to prepare the GoPro for the worst, making it close to unstoppable in any scenario, while further enhancing the usability of the camera thanks to those multiple mounting points.

Price \$99

Web www.redrockmicro.com

LEXAR 32GB JUMPDRIVE P10 FLASH DRIVE

The JumpDrive P10 offers USB 3.0 with superfast write speeds in a metal alloy body for extra protection

Storage media is a necessity in the digital age and it's amazing just how quickly you can fill it up, particularly in the case of digital video files. Flash drives, then, are the perfect solution particularly when you're on the go. Lexar has just released a new range of flash drives under the banner of the JumpDrive P10. Available in 16GB, 32GB and 64GB capacities, they are USB 3.0 offerings that deliver extremely fast transfer speeds, and claim up to 24x faster write times than some of the top USB 2.0 drives. Lexar claims it's able to transfer 1000 photos in less than 60 seconds, and a full-length HD movie in less than 40 seconds. This sort of speed can be hugely helpful when moving around large movie

files from one location to another, especially when time is of the essence. The body of the JumpDrive is constructed using a metal alloy design, with a retractable connector, which not only makes it look sleek, but also offers a good amount of protection should the worst happen. We were very impressed by the overall look and feel of this gadget.

VERDICT

Flash drives and other storage media may seem like an unimportant section of your kit. However, a fast and reliable storage device can help you cut down on your workflow times and have peace of mind that your precious files are safe. The JumpDrive P10 offers excellent speed in a strong and durable package, and is therefore ideal for those looking to travel with their files.

Price £79.99/\$87.30

Web www.lexar.com



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Notes

You know that feeling you get when you honestly can't watch one more short film and then, like a shining light, you find a gem? Well Notes is that gem.

Adam (Tyler Collins) has moved into a new place and he shares a kitchen with another resident, a nurse called Abi. The thing is, Abi works nights and so the two never see each other.

As a result, they communicate via angry hand-written notes, left in the kitchen. Of course, things soon start to get a little romantic. Written by John McPhail and Callum 'Bob' Weir, Notes is in essence a Scottish rom/com short, which has also been directed by McPhail and where the main characters are American. We're not sure if the

actors playing the parts are American and Abi (Emma Claire Brightlyn) tends to waver a little at times. It wasn't clear at first if she was Irish or American, but overall, this is pretty convincing stuff. The supporting cast does a good job of providing comic relief and you really come to care about the two leads over time.

Unusually for a short film, both

the sound and cinematography are great and there's not really any fault to be found in both departments. There's only one little issue and that's the sound effects at the beginning. They're somewhat comic book-ish and take you out of the film a little. We understand what they were trying to do, and perhaps they're simply too loud, but there was something incomplete about them and the resulting effect.

The script is well written and the idea original. What's more, like all good short films, it's visual. The ending cleverly sidesteps the usual schmaltz of a rom/com ending too. Notes has been selected for the Loch Ness and Deep Fried Film Festivals later this year and we recommend that you check it out pronto. ■

RATING ★★★★★

Director John McPhail

Writer John McPhail & Callum 'Bob' Weir

Cast Jim Sweeney, Emma Claire Brightlyn, Tyler Collins

Genre Short/Romantic Comedy

A Kiss So Warm and Tender

A club owner (and, we are assuming, mob boss) Nick Sinistra (Paul Keheller) has discovered that his wife Mae (Anna Leong-Brophy) is cheating on him and planning to run off to Florida with nightclub owner Noel Bradley (Eric Colvin). So, he has his goons rough up Noel and bring him to his seedy establishment in order to lay down the law.

Written and directed by Rob Hurtt, A Kiss So Warm and Tender is mostly a one-man piece. Sinistra does most of the talking and, when the shot stays on him, it's carefully lit and shot and captures a worthwhile performance from Keheller. It would have been better had they just stayed with that set-up, because as soon as something simple like segueing to a flashback comes along, or a

gunshot moment is staged, the edit becomes a complete mess.

The sound is also slightly distorted. Doubtless, we'll be accused of nitpicking and also of being overly negative with our reviews of these shorts, but vital component parts such as quality sound really are of vital importance. It really is unforgivable that so many filmmakers still can't get it right. There's too much emphasis on the look of the film, while the sound is all but forgotten. That said, the script leaves a lot to be desired too. When a character says something along the lines of 'she never looked more beautiful than that day', or quotes wedding vows or the bible, it just seems so cliched and hackneyed.

Some quick research online tells us that Rob Hurtt has made



a few short films now, so there really is no excuse for poor editing or sound, and for not being able to stage a simple gunshot scene without taking the audience out of the moment. The idea itself isn't particularly intriguing or original either and, so often with short films, we find ourselves asking what was it

about this particularly story that gave the filmmaker the desire to bring it to life, because it really hasn't come across on screen. ■

RATING ★★★☆☆

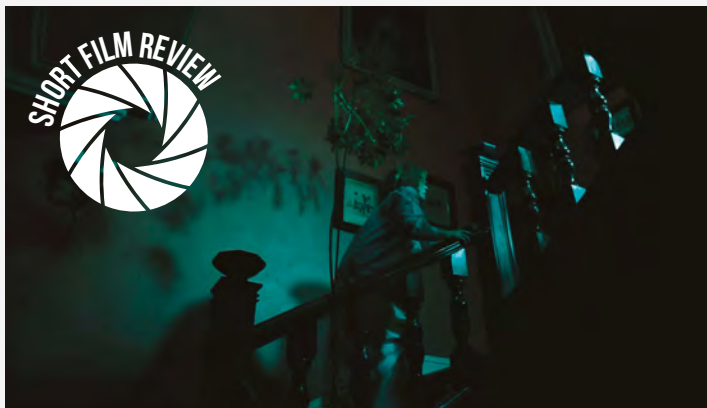
Director Rob Hurtt

Writer Rob Hurtt

Cast Paul Keheller, Eric Colvin, Anna Leong-Brophy

Genre Short/Gangster/Thriller

And Then The Dark



Short films are always tricky to get right, simply because there are so many ways you can go wrong with one. There are spoilers ahead here, so if you would rather watch *And Then The Dark* spoiler-free, then we suggest you do so now. Directed by Gary Caldwell and written by Richard Conte, *And Then The Dark* appears to be about a young couple returning to a fancy home after the death of an elderly lady there under suspicious circumstances. So it's a little jarring later when it's revealed the couple were living there when the death occurred. There also doesn't seem to be any motivation for the couple to behave the way they do. We didn't really have any idea what was going on and the story itself isn't original or overly intriguing. The ending feels like they had to have a pale face, dark-haired creepy looking girl because that's the done thing in horror now

if you want to scare people. The sound was also really distracting throughout. A lot of the dialogue and background noise comes across as distorted and the overall audio mix doesn't help either. One minute you're straining to hear the dialogue and the next, both the screams and the soundtrack are capable of waking up the neighbours. We spent the entire time turning the volume up and then down again. Frustrating.

However, the actors put in believable performances and obviously did the best they could with the so-so script. What's more, the cinematography was fantastic and we only wish as much care had gone into the sound department as the lighting and camera. A creepy and sometimes scary atmosphere permeates and this actually looks more professional than most. ■

RATING ★★☆☆☆

Director Gary Caldwell
Writer Richard Conte
Cast Lauren Lamarr, Liz McFarlane-Davie, Ralph Nieder
Genre Short/Horror



Love in Motion

Love in Motion features a familiar plotline - boy loses girl, boy meets new girl, falls in love, messes up, loses girl and then races to a train/plane/bus station to win her back.

Josh (Jay Barnard) has recently been dumped by the classic bitch of an ex. At a party he meets Sarah (Yazmin Daley) and, within an incredibly short time, they fall in love and then fall out and

then...well, you know the sort of scenario all too well we're sure. What *Love in Motion* does have going for it, however, is its one original twist, which is that Josh's emotions are expressed by his plasticine doppelganger. Why then, when Josh is going through his depressed, lovelorn stage, is the plasticine Josh nowhere to be seen?

The problem with many shorts

is that we're all so used to professional actors and million-dollar budget movies with perfect sound and picture quality, that when we see a short made by filmmakers with very little budget, it's glaringly obvious when the sound is too loud. It's also easy to hear when the soundtrack has not been professionally mixed. Add in wooden and unbelievable actors and you've got problems.

Love In Motion is the brave graduation project of writer and director Joe Slack, so we can afford to cut the filmmaker some slack himself. But, he also acts in the film and is credited as editing the film and working on the cinematography, and judging by the end result, it shows. This is clearly a lesson so often learned the hard way because filmmakers really need to learn to delegate.

We liked the stop-motion aspect of this project and, if there had been more of it, might have enjoyed it even more. But, the story is too familiar and the acting not strong enough to really believe that these characters could fall in love so easily. *Love* is a common theme in film and many a student has played out this scenario via the short. Nevertheless, you still really need to find an original angle. ■

RATING ★★☆☆☆

Director Joe Slack
Writer Joe Slack
Cast Jay Barnard, Yazmin Daley, Joe Slack, Lorna Tinsley
Genre Short/Romantic Comedy



Wild Girl Waltz

If you're a budding filmmaker and keen to get noticed then the little details really matter. These can include a professional looking DVD cover and, perhaps, a poster showcasing your efforts. Receiving an indie film to

review with a DVD cover that looks amateurish is not a great start. Then, of course, there are production considerations, such as taking the time to set-up an interesting shot, crafting believable characters, and also building an interesting storyline.

Professional-looking colour grading is a bonus too. Sadly, *Wild Girl Waltz* had none of the above attributes.

Tara and Angie take some 'goofy pills' to escape the boredom of their small town life. Brian is stuck babysitting them until they come down from their high. The problem is that we don't buy these characters randomly taking pills. They just don't seem like the type, or appear to have any real motivation to do so.

The acting is actually pretty good, but the problem is, the movie was miscast. We don't believe the actor playing Brian. There's one scene where he is supposed to be intimidating a man who owes him money. But the guy he is supposed to be intimidating could clearly wipe the floor with our Brian.

There also seems to be no plot to speak of, and no motivation for the characters. Why is Angie walking over to see her friend and brother?

Why do they take the pills? Why do they do any of the random things they do? We aren't given any indication. The look of the film itself is very home video - albeit HD home video. Some colour correction really would have helped the cause.

Elsewhere, the dialogue feels contrite and as if it's trying too hard. The character of Brian actually comes across as pretty sexist and, in general, the whole film seems to have a dim view of women. They are portrayed as being dumb, pill-popping, horny bimbos, or older christian ladies. The only positive we can take from this film is that the cast are attempting to do the best they can within their miscast roles and the pretty poor script they were given to work with. ■

RATING ★★★★★

Director Mark Lewis
Writer Mark Lewis
Runtime 82 mins
Cast Christina Shipp, Samantha Steinmetz, Jared Stern
Running Time 82 minutes



Also known as *The Incite Mill*, *Death Game* is a Japanese thriller with a neat psychedelic touch. From Hideo Nakata, the director of the original *Ring*; ten desperate and recession-struck people apply for the same once-in-a-lifetime, highly-paid part-time job. On application, they are selected and driven

to a secret desolate location. They soon find themselves in an underground complex, and are subjected to a week-long psychological experiment, which is constantly monitored by many prying CCTV cameras. Behind these closed doors, they are all given a weapon, along with a secret mission to kill each other

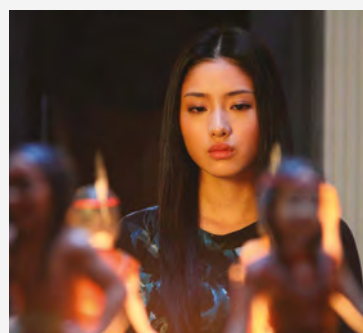
off, with the promise of financial bonuses beyond their wildest dreams.

As the week goes on, one by one their will begins to break and the body count begins to mount. Amidst the bloody murders, the twisted, dark past of each subject comes to light; friendships are broken and trust

lost as they fight for their lives and, natch, the ultimate cash prize reward

Death Game is a classic example of a Japanese psychological thriller, with shades of 1960's Sci-Fi like *The Prisoner*. It has unexpected twists, some gory deaths and keeps you interested until the end. We'd recommend it to any fan of Japanese cinema. ■

RATING ★★★★★



Director Hideo Nakata
Writer SHonobu Yonezawa, Satoshi Suzuki
Cast Kin'ya Kitaôji, Nagisa Katahira, Shinji Takeda
Certificate 15
Running Time 107 minutes

WHAT'S HOT?

The team singles out current and forthcoming indie movies plus documentaries that are creating a buzz!

Not Fade Away

From Sopranos director David Chase, comes a memorable story from the east coast of America during the 1960's. It's an engaging

'rise to stardom' tale of a struggling band, their ever-changing line-up and the lead singers romance.



Director David Chase
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 112 minutes
UK Certification TBC

My Brother the Devil

Two Egyptian brothers growing up on the streets of North London are trying to survive in a drug-fuelled gangland, but the youngest

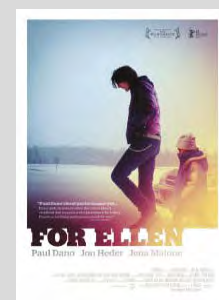
faces a sexual awakening, one which exposes and tests his older brothers prejudices.



Directors Sally El Hosaini
UK Release 2012
Language English
Duration 111 minutes
UK Certification 15

For Ellen

A failed rock star and reformed absent father takes an overnight long-distance drive to fight his ex wife over a divorce suit, and custody of their young daughter Ellen, when he realises he may have signed away access to her forever. Very poignant.



Director So Yong Kim
UK Release Feb 2013
Language English
Duration 94 minutes
UK Certification 15

Antiviral

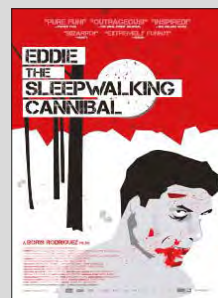
Directed by Brandon Cronenberg, son of legendary director David, this film is set in a future where celebrity-obsessed fans pay to be infected by viruses infecting their idols, in a desperate attempt to feel closer to them.



Director Brandon Cronenberg
Release February 2013
Language English
Duration 108 minutes
UK Certification 15

Eddie: The Sleepwalking Cannibal

A struggling artist finds an unexpected friend when he takes up a teaching position in a small town. He becomes a carer for Eddie, who is a seemingly docile student with a bizarre sleepwalking problem.



Director Boris Rodriguez
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 90 minutes
UK Certification TBC

This Is England '90

Shane Meadows is back this year with his long awaited follow-up to 2011's This is England '88. The story of Shaun, Milky, Woody, Lol and the rest of the gang continues. Meadows isn't giving much away on this one, so we'll just have to wait and see.



Director Shane Meadows
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration TBC
UK Certification TBC

The End of Love

A widowed single father struggles to raise his infant son in the absence of his late partner. After meeting a new love interest, he also

has to make some very difficult decisions that have potentially severe life-changing consequences.



Director Mark Webber
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 90 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Profile of a Killer

A baffled and exhausted police force desperately call in a retired FBI agent to crack a serial killer case. But, he soon finds himself at the mercy of a young perpetrator, who leaves a series of dead bodies along Highway 61.



Director Caspian Tredwell-Owen
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 108 minutes
UK Certification TBC

28 Hotel Rooms

American Horror Story director Matt Ross delivers a would-be romance between two highly-sexed commuters. Even though both

of them are in long-term relationships, their sordid hotel affair rapidly spirals into something more.



Director Matt Ross
Release 2013
Language English
Duration 82 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Attenberg

This Greek comedy tells the story of Marina, a socially alienated 23-year-old factory worker. Stuck in her boring routine, and at the mercy of



her sick father, she has an increasing dislike for all other people. Except her only friend, Bella.

Director Athina Rachel Tsangari
UK Release 2011
Language Greek, French
Duration 97 minutes
UK Certification TBC

No

An advertising executive with limited resources comes up with an unprecedented campaign to defeat Augusto Pinochet, while under the watchful eye of government henchmen. He plans to free Chile from oppression in the 1988 referendum.



Directors Pablo Larraín
UK Release Feb 2013
Language Spanish
Duration 118 minutes
UK Certification 15

Knuckle

Director Ian Palmer followed a group of Irish travellers for 12 years during a bitter feud with another family. Bare knuckle fighting is the way



of resolution for the family, so men across two generations go head-to-head in this brutal documentary.

Director Ian Palmer
UK Release 2011
Language English
Duration 97 minutes
UK Certification NA

Quite a Conundrum

After a tragic event occurs at a night pool party, two self-obsessed, foul-mouthed party girls, Tabitha and Mimi, have their debauched lifestyles turned upside down once the alcohol and drugs begin to wear off.



Director Thomas L. Phillips
Release 2013
Language English
Duration 82 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Kon-Tiki

A tale of survival on the ocean. This true story follows a seven-man crew 4,000 miles across the Pacific on a raft in 1947. Their aim was to prove it was possible for South Americans to have settled in Polynesia in the pre-Columbian age.



Director Joachim Rønning & Espen Sandberg
UK Release 2013
Language Norwegian
Duration 118 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Smashed

This is a terrific new drama from James Ponsoldt. A long-time alcoholic couple's marriage is put to the test when, after some



bad experiences, the wife decides enough is enough. With the help of a work colleague, she tries to get sober.

Director James Ponsoldt
UK Release 2012
Language English
Duration 81 minutes
UK Certification 15

Fat Kid Rules the World

Based on the 2003 novel by KL Going, Fat Kid Rules the World is the story of a cool high-school dropout guitarist who meets an overweight, suicidal teen and asks him to join his band. What a mix.



Director Matthew Lillard
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration TBC
UK Certification TBC

Happy New Year

A war-torn marine returns home to rebuild his personal life. He finds new friendship through a group of fellow war vets. But, just as their lives are changing for the better, the ghosts of Iraq return to haunt them, and they are faced with the guilt of their past.



Director K. Lorrel Manning
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 104 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Red Flag

An independent filmmaker travels across southern America to promote his new film. Hoping to escape the pain of a recent



relationship breakdown, he falls straight into an awkward love triangle. A dark comedy about love and death.

Director Alex Karpovsky
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 85 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Song For Marion

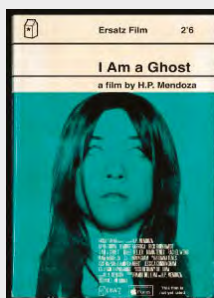
Arthur, an old man whose wife has recently passed away, decides to join the eccentric local choir, which she used to attend. This helps him to rebuild his relationship with his son in an emotional journey of self-discovery.



Director Paul Andrew Williams
UK Release Feb 2013
Language English
Duration 93 minutes
UK Certification PG

I Am a Ghost

A decidedly unsettling film by director H.P. Mendoza. A troubled young spirit wanders around her own house, unable to leave. With the help of a clairvoyant hired to rid the house of spirits, disturbing mysteries about her past are soon uncovered.



Director H.P. Mendoza
Release Oct 2012 (US)
Language English
Duration 74 minutes
UK Certification 15

Paradise: Love

The first in a trilogy by Ulrich Seidl. Teresa, a 50-year-old mother from Austria, travels to Kenya in search of love, only to be faced with disappointment. She must learn that on the beaches of Kenya, love is merely a business.



Director Ulrich Seidl
UK Release 2013
Language German, English, Swahili
Duration 120 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Leonie

Originally released in Japan in 2010, Leonie finally sees a US and UK release in 2013. This film covers the life of the early 20th Century



American teacher and journalist Leonie Gilmour, the mother of artist and architect Isamu Noguchi.

Director Hisako Matsui
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 102 minutes
UK Certification PG-13

Welcome to Pine Hill

Welcome to Pine Hill is an extension of the directors earlier short film Prince/William. It tells the story of a New York City bouncer and



reformed drug dealer, played by first-time actor Shannon Harper, and how he deals with a grim medical diagnosis.

Director Keith Miller
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 81 minutes
UK Certification TBC

The Canyons

Youth, glamour and surveillance meet in this dark, erotic thriller, which has divided opinion. Some expect a classic, while others say the



performances are stilted. The amateurish teaser trailers don't help things either, but it's still rather tempting.

Directors Paul Schrader
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration 100 minutes
UK Certification 18

Touchy Feely

A professional masseuse is suddenly unable to carry out her everyday job when she finds herself strangely repelled by human contact.



Her dentist brother, on the other hand, finds new healing powers when his dental business begins to fail.

Director Lynn Shelton
UK Release Jan 2013
Language English
Duration 90 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Benny Loves Killing

A London filmmaker tries to complete a horror film, but becomes obsessed with her dream. Soon she takes on many unusual



characteristics as she gradually realises, and comes to terms with, the real horrors within her own personal life.

Director Ben Woodiwiss
Released 2013
Language English
Duration 100 minutes
UK Certification TBA

See Girl Run

A 30-something woman becomes obsessed with the 'what ifs' in her past life, and can't stop herself from thinking that the grass isn't as green as it could have been.



She decides to revisit old relationships to find guidance, and to make sense of her current life.

Director Nate Meyer
UK Release 2013
Language English
Duration TBC
UK Certification TBC

Death Game

Hideo Nakata, director of the original Ring, brings us a new horror flick to remember.

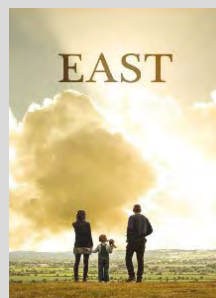
When ten people go for an interview for the same once-in-a-lifetime job, they find themselves locked in an underground maze, in a deadly game of survival.



Director Hideo Nakata
UK Released July 2013
Language Japanese
Duration 103 minutes
UK Certification 15

East

After their parents are killed, Elva and Sammy embark on a long eastward journey in search of a better life. But things soon turn sour, and they find themselves in need of help. Completed in 2011, the film won Best Feature Film at the UK Film Festival.



Director Leonora Moore
Release TBC
Language English
Duration 86 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Modest Reception

Shown at the 2012 Edinburgh Film Festival, this is a tale of an eccentric couple who drive around mountainous regions of Iran handing out large amounts of money to village folk in return for odd requests. Also known by its Iranian title Paziraie Sadeh.



Directors Mani Haghighi
UK Release 2013
Language Persian
Duration 100 minutes
UK Certification TBC

Snowman's Land

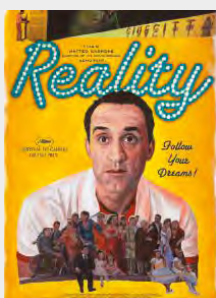
A would-be hitman accidentally kills the wrong person, before eventually tracking down the right target. He needs to escape, but lack of money means one more job in the remote Carpathian Mountains. A German comedic nightmare.



Director Tomasz Thomson
UK Release 2013
Language German
Duration 95 minutes
UK Certification 12A

Reality

Luciano is a fishmonger who loves to perform, and never misses an opportunity to grab the spotlight. One day, his friends and family persuade him to audition for Big Brother. This decision leads him into a fascinating world of obsession and paranoia.



Director Matteo Garrone
UK Release March 2013
Language English
Duration 116 minutes
UK Certification 15

Liberal Arts

A new rom-com from How I Met Your Mother actor Josh Radnor, who also stars here, in only his second film. A 35-year-old man returns to his old college to attend a professor's retirement party, where he meets and falls for a 19-year-old student.



Director Josh Radnor
UK Release 2012
Language English
Duration 97 minutes
UK Certification 12

BEST OF THE REST...

Releases by inspirational filmmakers that may have passed you by

Moon

Sam Bell, an employee of Lunar Industries, is coming to the end of a three-year stint on the moon in which he supplied Earth with new power resources. But, prior to departure, he has a very strange encounter.



Director Duncan Jones
Year 2009
Language English
Duration 97 minutes
UK Certification 15

Sarah Palin: You Betcha!

Nick Broomfield tirelessly hunts down an elusive Sarah Palin for an interview whilst on the election trail in 2010. In her home town of Wasilla, Alaska, he finds that opinions of the politician are very much split.



Director Nick Broomfield
Year 2011
Language English
Duration 91 minutes
UK Certification NA

Man on Wire

In 1974, Philippe Petit performed a high-wire walk between the World Trade Centre's twin towers. The daring stunt took six years to plan, and this incredible film tells the in-depth story of how and why he did it.



Director James Marsh
Year 2008
Language English
Duration 94 minutes
UK Certification 12

Rec

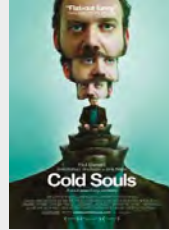
A TV crew gets locked in an apartment building with something evil. To the average horror fan, Rec needs no introduction. Spawning two sequels, this film breathed new life into the genre.



Director Jaume Balagueró, Paco Plaza
Year 2008
Language Spanish
Duration 78 minutes
UK Certification 18

Cold Souls

A disillusioned actor loses sight of his dreams and puts his soul into storage, but realises that without a soul other aspects of his life begin to fail, including his marriage. He then rents the soul of a poet to try to improve his life.



Director Sophie Barthes
Year 2009
Language English
Duration 101 minutes
UK Certification 12A

A Serious Man

From the celebrated Coen Brothers comes the story of college professor Larry Gopnik. Our main character is a man trying to make sense of his chaotic life, amidst a failing marriage, thieving children and mounting debt.



Director Joel and Ethan Coen
Year 2009
Language English
Duration 106 minutes
UK Certification 15

A Prophet

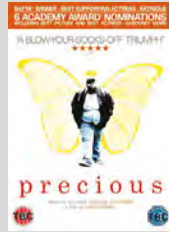
In this epic French movie, a young Arab man is sent to prison for six years, where he becomes a feared gang leader both inside and outside the prison walls. A tense and dark prison drama with racial tension and violence.



Director Jacques Audiard
Year 2009
Language French
Duration 155 minutes
UK Certification 18

Precious

An extremely dark and emotional film that tracks the life of a pregnant teenager in New York. Tensions mount as she tries to make a better life for herself, despite the physical and mental trauma she has suffered.



Director Lee Daniels
Year 2010
Language English
Duration 110 minutes
UK Certification 15

Timecrimes

An entertaining, fast-paced indie science-fiction thriller in which Hector, a family man, accidentally travels back in time, and makes some serious errors of judgement that seriously threaten the future.



Director Nacho Vigalondo
Year 2007
Language Spanish
Duration 92 minutes
UK Certification 15

Ghosts

Master documentary maker Nick Broomfield tells the story of a young Chinese girl who is smuggled into the UK so she can support her family back home. Inspired by the Morecambe Bay tragedy of 2004.



Director Nick Broomfield
Year 2007
Language English
Duration 96 minutes
UK Certification 15

Grizzly Man

A fascinating but sad documentary from legendary filmmaker Werner Herzog. This is the tale of an eccentric grizzly bear activist who was killed in October of 2003 whilst living amongst the feared wild animals in Alaska.



Director Werner Herzog
Year 2005
Language English
Duration 103 minutes
UK Certification 15

Exit Through the Gift Shop

A shopkeeper and an amateur filmmaker attempt to track down and film graffiti artist Banksy. With a surprising outcome, this film will leave a lasting impression.



Director Banksy
Year 2010
Language English
Duration 86 minutes
UK Certification 15



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